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DISCOURSES

ON

PRACTICAL AND DOCTRINAL SUBJECTS

A SERIES OF

DISCOURSES

ON

Practical and Doctrinal Subjects.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM DOW, A.M.

FIRST SERIES.

FOURTH EDITION

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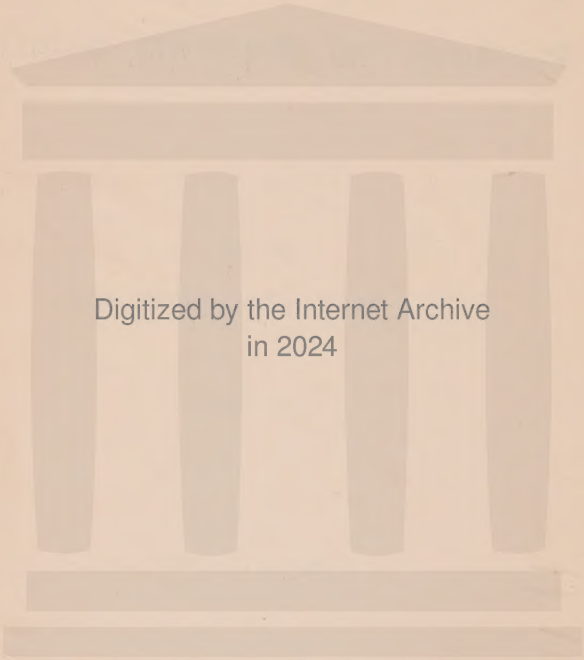

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PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

An apology may be expected from any one who ventures to add another volume of sermons to the countless multitude which already load our shelves, and swarm on the counters of our book-shops. In this country, where great ecclesiastical questions have of late agitated men's minds, and absorbed their interests, an apology may be considered still more necessary from one who, having had no part in those discussions, or in the events from which they sprang, asks for a share of men's attention, and that for another set of subjects altogether.

The only apology which the author has to offer is, that the subjects which he has sought to bring before the mind of the Church, are of essential importance at any period, and peculiarly so in the days in which we live. Some of them, he believes, have been too much neglected,—all of them require to be far more effectually handled than this volume pretends to do. It is by her

own pastors and teachers that the Church in Scotland must receive that fuller declaration of them, by giving heed to which she shall be able to endure, and to keep her place for God in that conflict which is now before her in common with all the rest of the Church of Christ.

EDINBURGH, *Nov.* 1847.

SECOND EDITION.

This edition differs from the first, only by containing the reprint of a discourse originally published in a separate form; by the change of one or two sentences for the sake of perspicuity; and by greater typographical correctness.

EDINBURGH, *May*, 1853.

FOURTH EDITION.

These Sermons are now re-issued in the hope that they may profit yet another generation.

GLASGOW, *May*, 1912.

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SERMON I.

GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.

"And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—LUKE ii. 7-14.

IT is the custom of a large part of the Christian Church to set apart certain days for keeping alive the memory of the great actings of God toward His Church, that the people may celebrate them worthily with lively faith and gratitude. It seemed good to that body of the reformers who prevailed in this land, in the wisdom given unto them, entirely to obliterate and do away with the Christian calendar, and with all the names and observances which had filled up the ecclesiastical

year. They did so because of the manifold superstitions with which the rites and observances of the church had become encumbered, and because of the spirit of bondage to times and days under which men's minds had become prostrate. We may rejoice in their work, in so far as it put away these real evils; and, having our minds freed from this bondage by their good efforts, and being in no present dread of superstition, may join ourselves with those multitudes, who in all regions of Christendom are this day stirring up their hearts to worship God, and to remember His mighty acts towards the children of men.

That which we this day[1] prepare our hearts for celebrating, is the greatest of all God's actings, even the birth into this world of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Accordingly, on looking back through the mist of nineteen centuries, you might, as on this eve, have observed three men journeying from the distant kingdoms of the East—the original cradle of mankind—who bring with them costly offerings, and seek an infant king of the Jews, that they may do him homage. In them survives primeval, patriarchal tradition, by which God hath made them wise, and now, through secret personal premonition, under the guidance of a star whose movements they watch, they come up and draw near to Jerusalem. On another side are certain plain men—peasants—with minds exercised on no high things, thinking of no great events, or turns of human

[1] Preached on Christmas Eve, 1846.

history, or wonderful purposes of God, but of their duty to their masters, watching with fidelity their masters' flocks. There were also, living at this time in the hill country of Judea, Zacharias and Elizabeth, through whom the Holy Ghost after long silence had spoken, with scarce understood words, perhaps with misinterpreted words, in harmony with those of the ancient prophets, concerning a horn of salvation lifted up in the house of David. In Jerusalem itself, there was Simeon who waited for the consolation of Israel, and Anna, a widow who had watched in the temple eighty years, eighty long years of deferred hope, spent in fastings and prayers night and day, looking for the promises made unto the fathers. Besides these, there were the priests and the professional scribes, whose lips should keep knowledge, masters of all the text and literature of the subject, who could compute the times for the Messiah's kingdom, who could *at once* answer the king's enquiries, and certify him with scriptural quotation, as to the very place where Christ should be born; yet themselves, for the most part, personally believing and hoping nothing, abstractly interested in a curious enquiry, perhaps disputing, controverting, and writing books about the Messiah's kingdom. As for the people,—the phraseology of the Psalms and the Prophets floats in their memories, and is familiar to their ears; but they are corrupted by a religion that has become mere acting, they are disheartened by long oppression, they have of tradition nothing beyond its phrases and its forms;

they and Herod know just enough to be troubled together. Around the pale of the favoured people lies the world of mankind, wasted and wearied with struggles after a rest which it never reaches, filled now with an obscure foreboding of some great event, it knows not what, by which light and liberty might come to all men.

This is the outside picture.

Suddenly—not to the priests, not to those who had prophesied, not even to the patient watchers in the temple, but to the faithful keepers of their masters' flocks,—there came a vision of the glory of the Lord, and a voice of heavenly song, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

And what is the little visible scene to which all these things are pointing? There is a poor mother, too poor to command the regard or attention of men, unbefriended, in a strange place, only too glad of the shelter of a stable, where she has laid her new born son. All this presentiment of the nations, and this hope of the children of Abraham, these prophesyings, this star, and this heavenly song, have no greater object than that poor mother and her helpless child. Yet the thing that has there happened, how little soever the senses of man could find in it; however fitted to disappoint the pride, or even to rouse the indignant scorn of those who reckoned that they had the oracles of God and their fulfilments too in their keeping; the thing that has happened is the greatest event that the world has seen, since the

day when it was created. The formation of man out of the dust of the ground was great, and of Eve out of the sleeping Adam's side was mysterious and wonderful ; but here is something greater than either of these. It is like to them, but far greater and more unsearchable than they.

For this Babe is himself He "whose goings forth were from of old, from everlasting." He who was, and could not cease to be, very God, eternal God, has been conceived in the womb of a virgin, and is now come into the world an infant, helpless, hanging on the breasts of a mother who hath not where to lay her head. God hath come into the world—personally. In that child is Godhead and manhood indissolubly united in one person. The eternal God, in the person of the Son, begins to exist, and from this day continues to exist, in a real human body and soul. That person who was from everlasting the Son of the Father, is now also the Son of the Virgin, the Son of man. Into the human family hath the Son of God entered, calling them brethren. And that child is He. No sensible beams of divine glory proceed from Him. No properties beyond those of a passive speechless infant are displayed by Him. He is not anything as man—neither strong, nor influential, nor commanding. He lies there dependent upon man's treatment of Him. The fallen world makes its painful impression on His tender weakness, as it does upon that of others. The men that are in it are to Him what they are to other men. He is sensible to their kindness

and unkindness as another child is, yea to their ambition and jealousy, to their tyranny and violence. He knows human life from the very first in its fears and troubles, in nocturnal flight, in exile; the innocent cause of carnage and wailing to the town that gave Him birth. And so He continued a true man in all the progress of His life; a root out of a dry ground, unnoticed, unencouraged, undesired, forgotten of all men; subject to His parents in their life of toil; learning obedience by the things which He suffered; and, even after His baptism in Jordan, known as more than man only by those to whom the Father revealed Him. He is born a Jew, under the covenant of Abraham, under the law of Moses; a law of hard, burdensome observance, of offerings and expiations by pain and death. He knows God by revelation, by the Scriptures of truth. His creature will is attunable to that of the Creator, only through self-denial and the carrying of a cross. Faith, watchful difficult faith, His only safeguard as a subject of the divine government; for things visible are no guide, but rather a deception; faith, I say, in the invisible God, and in the hidden purpose of the heart of God, which purpose, though revealed in the Scriptures, every visible thing did to the eye contradict.

This, then, is the event, and these its circumstances. God who made man has at length become man Himself. God who set man at the head of a world which He pronounced good, has become man, and entered a world whose conditions

have all been made evil by the sin of man. God hath become man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—a real man, not a feigned or apparent man, but *very* man, *true* son of a human mother. A holy thing is born of a human mother, and shall be called the Son of God. He is eternal, for He is God; yet in time He derives manhood from a daughter of Adam; and He is no sooner born into the world than forthwith He experiences a mortal man's lot, and that man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. This, I say, is the event; a wonderful act of God in Himself; of which He Himself in the person of the Son is the subject. The eternal Son is what He was not before, He has become man. This is the event, the greatest of all possible events in which the creation can have a share; the explanation of all other events that have happened to the creature. For in that babe is seen the reason of the possibility of all God's dealings with men from the beginning. The least promise—the smallest mercy that had ever come to man—the reason of it is displayed there in that fact, that God has become man. Let us believe it.

Brethren, do you believe this fact? Yes, you do. You say you do; and God forbid that I should doubt what you say. But believing it, consider it well. For the faith of settled, unquestioned points of theology, is very apt to degenerate into phraseology; and the greatest actings of God come to be regarded as matters of course, which the natural faculties could embrace;

as if any man could know the Father but the Son, or any man could know the Son, but He to whom the Father is pleased to reveal Him. Christianity is not like one of the natural sciences. In them you can attain a truth, and lay it by you, and go on. They can be made at once palpable to your natural understanding. But faith is a gift of God. It is a gift to each individual. God is the only giver of it, and He is the giver of it to each individual. It comes indeed by hearing, but it comes not of hearing. It is of God. Reasoning, demonstration, cannot produce faith. They cannot give natural perception to a man, neither can they do the greater thing, and give him spiritual perception. Therefore your belief that God did become man, and that that child was He, is a miraculous faith: Blessed are ye, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but Christ's Father who is in heaven.

And now having received grace to believe it, let us consider it, in its sources, and objects, and consequences.

Why then is the Son of God born into the world, and why is He born thus? What is God's object in this event? It was the will of God—eternally uttered in the unsearchable councils of those who said, "Let us make man in our image." —It was His will, I say, to make man partaker of that eternal life which was with Him from everlasting. Eternal life consists in the knowledge of God. For this end, of imparting eternal life to man, He was pleased to manifest Himself

personally. Not in vision. Not by words or declarations. Not by acts merely. But personally. Namely, by the Son of God becoming man; by the Son becoming the visible, permanent, personal revelation of God. As it is said by St. Paul, "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," or in a body. And by our blessed Lord Himself—"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." And of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself it is said, "this is the true God and eternal life." But further, God's will was to dwell with men, not among them merely, but in them; to make men His temple, His eternal dwelling-place, a permanent revelation of Him to all His creatures. The blessedness of man, and the stability of man, being attained by *that* revelation of God, in the person of *the man* Jesus Christ, the blessedness and stability of the creature is provided for, when man has become the temple and dwelling-place of God. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Of this purpose God had ever spoken to men more clearly or more obscurely. For this man had been created. *He* was made in the image of God, he *alone* of all the creatures was made at first in the image of God, *for this purpose.* And of the fulfilment of this purpose the birth of Jesus Christ was the first act.

But you know that there was another, a special cause of that event; out of which cause flowed

the circumstances and *manner* of His appearing. This specialty is our sin. It was sin that made it necessary for Him to taste death for all men.

He was to be the beginning of the new creature, yet He came not forth on that account an independent new man, but He became a brother, and finding the brethren partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same. And thus placing Himself beside His brethren, He did what no other man ever did: He fulfilled all righteousness. After all generations had failed, and every man had been found guilty before God, this man obeyed perfectly; and commencing from the day of His birth, through every trial, through every difficulty before which other men had fallen, through every temptation common to man, *He* did only the good pleasure of God, and was the holy one of God: until in death He presented Himself the spotless Lamb, God's elect one in whom His soul delighted; tried, approved, whom God Himself gave, whom God accepted, as the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Such He came, He was born into the world, this weak, mortal infant, that He might thus, through all trials, approve Himself, and at last die for the sins of the whole world.

And there is a further reason. In this great act, He was a priest before God. But He is further to be our *perpetual* High-Priest—we were to be reconciled by His death, but we are to be saved by His life. He *first* purged our sins, and *then* sat down on the right hand of God. He is

our great High-Priest there. To be such, He must first be this infant. The condition into which man had come, made it necessary for him to have a High-Priest who could be touched with the feeling of poor mortals' infirmities, and who could, though abiding in immaculate holiness, be tempted in all points like as we are. We needed a *merciful*, as well as a faithful High-Priest. Knowing the anger of God, and its weight on human flesh, He should be able to compassionate the ignorant, and them that are out of the way; and should intercede, not with the formality of a hired or appointed advocate, but with the earnestness of one in whom is conjoined the tenderness of a fellow-suffering man, and the incomprehensible love of God. For this cause, that He may know our frame, lo! He assumes it! that He may remember that we are dust, He becometh dust; that He may not look upon us as a stranger would from afar, He maketh our depths and pains and fears His own. He Himself first overcomes, He overcomes by the grace and power and succour of God; so that He may know to dispense that same grace according to its needful measure to each of us.

You see then, how in this event of the birth of the Virgin's Son, in these circumstances, and with these capabilities of humiliation, the purpose of God and the condition of man alike are met and provided for. The angels saw it—and therefore they sang that song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

"Peace on earth," for this is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. "Good will toward men," for through this child there shall be access for God to men, and for men to God. "Glory to God," for this is He by whom He shall eternally make Himself known, first in Him personally, then in Him and all the children whom God shall give unto Him.

This event hath begun to make all things new. It is here, indeed, only a beginning; but faith can see in it all the rest. True, it was not until He had died and risen again that He was made perfect. It was not till then that He could send the Holy Ghost, or make men members of His body. His resurrection was the first springing up of the new creature. But here it is in the seed, visible, tangible. The life is manifested, and we see it. Till now there was a word, a promise. There was faith and a prospect, but now there is a *fact*. God *is* in flesh. "We know that the Son of God is come." God's dwelling with men is then not a figure. Man is fallen, but God is unchanged. The fall of man has not frustrated the purpose of God. He made man in His own image. He purposed to dwell in him. He purposed to set him over the works of His hands, and it shall be done. For He has taken flesh, and made it part of His holy self, and therefore He can, notwithstanding the fall, have intercourse with man, and make man one with Him. It had always been true and more or less clearly revealed; it had been acted upon by God; and by the saints, had in all

ages been believed in, according to the measure in which it was revealed; but now it is apparent in a fact. The name of the virgin's child is Emmanuel, and the child is that which His name signifies, "God with us." It was this fact, to the eye of man signal only in its insignificance—it was this fact alone that had made possible one word of promise, from the promise of the woman's seed, down to this song of the angels. He is the seed to whom the promise was made, and in whom the promise is substantiated. He became the seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made, that He might inherit the promises. He became the son of David, to whom the kingdom and a permanent throne was promised, that He might inherit a kingdom that should have no end, and might glorify God by reigning in it. He became the seed of the woman, of her on whom the anger of God fell, and to whom the consolation was whispered. He became the seed of the woman, that the consolation might come.

The seed of the woman has appeared on the earth—the bruiser of the serpent's head. The Son of God has procured for Himself a body; His heel can be bruised; and the earthly power is preparing itself to be the instrument of the serpent in bruising it, and shall bruise it. And by His stripes shall we be healed. And we shall have such an High-Priest as becometh us.

This child is the head of the new family of mankind. From Him unfold themselves, as the flowers and fruit unfold themselves from the

bud, all the purposes and acts of God. From henceforth God shall be known *in man.* First it pleased God that in Him should all fulness dwell. But *thereafter* He gathers to Him a body—His Church. The Father gave men to Him; and He gave Him power over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to as many as the Father gave Him. These are the Church. They are baptized into Him. They are made one with Him, and out of His fulness they all receive. He is in them, and they in Him. As truly as there is but one God, yet three persons in the inscrutable Trinity; as truly as there is but one person and yet two natures in Jesus Himself; so truly are Christ and His Church *one.* In itself the Church is one, notwithstanding its divided and shattered condition, and one with Him. By this unity with Him we are made partakers of the divine nature; and as He became son of man, so we are made *in Him* sons of God. This *one thing* is the dwelling-place of God. Therein alone God is known. From thence proceedeth the knowledge of Him. From the Church it proceeds to all other men. The law goes forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;—and not only to men—but to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places shall be known by *the Church* the manifold wisdom of God. The Church is the revealer of God—His instrument created anew for Himself—the dispenser of His love—the light of the world—a dew from the Lord among all people.

Yet, as He was, so are we, so is the Church of

God, in this world. We know what we are. "To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed in His name." This is the manner of the love of God toward us, that we should be called the sons of God. This is what we are. We know that we are the sons of God. He knew that He was the son of God, but He was not like it. He knew that He was the heir of a throne, but it did not seem so. He knew that He was the Saviour of the world, but He did not appear to be so, for He could not save Himself. And as He was, so are we in this world. Nay, in many respects much more unlike that which we know ourselves to be, than He was unlike that which He knew Himself to be. We are infirm, sickly, fallible, in need of mercy, beholden to Him for daily forgiveness, falling seven times a day. He was all that we are, yet without sin; in Him was no sin at all. We attain not to this. And yet we must still believe in what we are. And how shall we that fall into sin daily, contrive to believe that we are the sons of God? St. John, the holiest, the severest of all, provides an answer, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." We know that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And so we can abide in the faith of our position and calling as the sons of God.

As He was so are we in this world. Now the world rejected Him. They could see nothing in

Him. And the world shall reject the Church of Christ. How much less can they see in it. In Him they saw no evil, but the sins of the Church are open before all men. And yet that Church is the instrument of God by which Jesus would do His Father's will; by which alone He will do it. The world which rejected Christ, because they could not bear His holiness, should be rejecting the Church because they cannot bear its holiness. The world should be calling those of the household Beelzebub, because of the same things which made them call the master of it Beelzebub. And, indeed, the world *does* hate holiness just as it did before. It hates it whenever it can see it. It hates the Church, because the Church *should* be holy. The world says it hates the Church for its too visible unholiness, for its divisions, for its hypocrisies. But God knows that these are but its apologies for hating us. Why should it hate it for the very thing in which the Church is like to itself? No, it is because it knows that it is God's witness for holiness and truth—an unbearable thing in the earth. Therefore it swamps the Church with human laws, with human limitations; it swaddles it with concordats, crushes it with traitorous embraces, and bribes it with worldly gifts. But if it will not be limited or leagued with; if it will enter into no worldly covenant; if it will not mould or fashion itself to please man; if it will not consent to be a mere harmless, or at best an ornamental part of the furniture of human society; if it will call itself the servant of

God, and the presence of the Lord Jesus on the earth; if it will be jealous for the Lord of Hosts, and demand for Him the faith and the obedience of His creature; if it will witness for Him and tell the world that He made it for Himself, and that His purpose shall stand, and that He has set His king upon His holy hill of Zion, and that Jesus His Son, the despised babe, the man crucified in weakness, is raised from the dead indeed, and shall reign on the earth: then, the world *will* not bear it. Even now, when that testimony is but rare and indistinct, clouded by want of unanimity, or extinguished through the Church's long forgetfulness of her calling; even now the Church *as such* is not endured. The meretricious churches themselves scarcely are, and we know that even *they* shall before long be hated by their earthly paramour,—hated, stripped, cast out, to the just loathing and abhorrence of all men. But if God's *reputed* witness cannot be endured, even when it is ready to make any compromise that the fleshliest mind can demand of it—how much less shall faithful witness be tolerated whenever it is found. And if the Church shall awake again to a knowledge of her unity within herself by the Holy Ghost, to a consciousness of her oneness with her Lord, and to a perception of her calling to be the revealer of God and the presence of God on the earth; shall not the earth, the Christian earth, the kingdoms of Christendom, and the polities of Christian men, either mightily and miraculously

change, or else cry out—away with such a thing from the midst of us.

Look around you in Christendom, and you see the war already begun. You see Babylon falling, and you see scorn and hatred of truth, and of the witnesses for truth, shaking *these* also if possible to their fall. This is the grand, the peculiar feature of these times. Men are rising up everywhere to say—What is this that has so long held our spirits in bondage—that has told us that we are children and she our mother, and overborne our reason with her dictates and her dogmas? We will be children no longer; we will assert manhood; we will demand evidence of her divine mission; we will see whence come her bishops and her presbyters, and her courts, and her laws. We will sweep away the old hypocrite and her cobwebs. We will tear off her changeable suits of apparel, her surplices and her gowns, her hoods and her veils, her mantles and her wimples, and her crisping pins; and see whether she be a reality or a make believe. She shall render us an answer *if she can*, in all that our reason shall demand of her. We will be put off no longer with mysteries. I say this is the mood that is coming upon men—that is growing upon men all throughout Christendom. This is what they are going to do and what they have begun to do. But thank God, alongside of this movement, which begins to engulf as in a whirlpool the mass of the people, there spring up here and there faithful men, more or less in the light of the Lord, who perceive the calling of the

Church as the bride and handmaid of Christ, and who, more or less guided by the Holy Ghost, and more or less obedient to Jesus Christ, do, by words and efforts, testify for Him and for His kingdom. Some in one form and some in another. So low is the Christian Church fallen, that there are regions where the faithful man does all he *can* do, when he declares that the world is not God—declares it, I mean, because he believes it, for I speak not of the formal professional declaration. I speak of the living man—and I say there are Christian cities, where a living man must be a brave man, and one whose affections are set on things above, to testify even this much through love of his fellow-men or through zeal for his Master. Elsewhere the testimony is for the freedom of the Lord Jesus Christ to guide His Church according to His will, without dictation or interference of earthly powers. Elsewhere it is for the presence of God in His ordinances, the reality and efficacy of sacraments, and the calling of men in their several places in the Church to be vessels of divine grace to one another. Elsewhere it is for subordination, government, order and obedience. Elsewhere it is for spiritual worship in contra-distinction to reasoning, to sentimental worship, to the superstition of intellectual idols, and to the superstition of material idols. Elsewhere it is for the hope of the Lord's appearing, and for the hope of righteousness and peace, health and true liberty being brought by Him unto the earth. These various testimonies, the

Church in various places, out of the depths of divine life that are yet in her, is at present giving forth, by individuals, by bodies, in all ways. And what shall any Christian man say of these fragmentary and scattered testimonies, or how shall he hail them? Rejoice in them to be sure; dissociate them from their accessories; pierce through the hull of human infirmity that hides them from sensual men; and behold in them all taken together, a divine babe, though wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Rejoice, and yet he should sorrow withal over this, that they *are* so fragmentary, that they are fragments mutually jealous, seeking to strangle one another. And he should long for that divine grace to work, which will bind them all in unity. And the Church—the mother that hath given the thing birth—the thing, I say, for it is one, although men are too unspiritual to see its unity—shall she disown it, shall she look upon it strangely, coldly, and say this is no offspring of God; the Holy Ghost hath not given me this fruit; I will not call it by so high a name? Oh, no! God forbid that she should speak thus. Rather, with the blessed Virgin's faith, let her soul magnify the Lord, and her spirit rejoice in God her Saviour, because He hath looked upon the low estate of His handmaiden, and the time is at hand, when all nations shall call her blessed.

Dear brethren, we must hold to the reality and the unity of the Church of the living God. We must believe, as God doth; we must call the

things that are not as though they were. We must believe, that all along, from the first feeble cry of that babe of Bethlehem, down to the strugglings and the faintings of this day, one God has been at work, and one purpose has been pursued. And that it has advanced and made real progress. That, notwithstanding all improbabilities, and darkness, and discouragements, our salvation *is* nearer than when we believed. From the moment in which the Son of God became man, the eye of God has been upon this work of His, and nothing has fallen out but for the furtherance of it. From that moment (or indeed *eternally*, because that moment was to arrive), the earth and the human race were the first of the works of God. Humanity till now having apparently a common lot with the rest of the creation, is shown in its honour *above* the rest of the creation; eternally honoured as that of which God has made His Son partaker. Now is revealed the reason why the earth and man upon it were made the object of the cares and duties, and centre of the circuits of all creation; for what it was that the sun knew his going down, and the moon and the stars were set for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years. It was *because* the Son of God took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.

God hath not lost sight of His purpose and His work. He hath not repented of the thought of His love towards man. He gave His only begotten Son to death because of His love. He hath

not repented of that. He hath not drawn back His hand, nor stopped short there. He called us sons, and He sent the Comforter, the Spirit of His Son, the Holy Ghost, and gave gifts unto men, even to the rebellious, that God might dwell among them, and He has not repented of that; He has not said ye are *not* My sons. The calling, aye, and the gifts of God are without repentance. He hath not *despaired* of His wonderful work. By the incarnation of His Son, He hath made that wonderful work *possible;* and hath prepared the foundation-stone, the chief corner-stone, and the head stone of that living temple, which *is* His wonderful work. And now there are being curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth, and in continuance being fashioned, all the members that are written in the book of God; to the end, that the second man, the Lord from heaven, may be revealed. Not now as a solitary babe, but with ten thousands of His saints; not now in lowliness and infirmity, but in the glory of His Father, and of the holy angels. Then, the Jews who were disappointed in Him, or too proud to own Him in the form of a servant, shall see that their expectations, which were falsely timed, and their interpretations,—which were partial, though true in the main—are answered and infinitely surpassed, and they shall look on Him whom they pierced, and shall mourn, and their hearts shall return to the house of David.

And—as that first event came to pass on the earth, as it were when men slept, stealing in upon

them, and perfecting itself ere they were aware of its being begun—so shall that second event for which we look, and which is nigh, even at the very door, in like manner come to pass. As that was prefigured in signs to the wise men, so that they came to the place of His appearing, even now, by signs and tokens, is this foreshowing itself to many. As it came suddenly upon those shepherds, so now, to faithful keepers of Christ's sheep, shall it come suddenly, in glorious light, and voice of heavenly song. As it caused the Spirit to break its long silence in those ministering priests, and through those widows and aged men, who prayed and fasted in the temple; so again now shall the psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs of the Church be re-awakened. But the worldly men and Herod shall be sorely troubled at the report, and their scribes, and textuaries, and dealers with the letter, shall discuss and reason about it, and write their cold commentaries, until the lightning have flashed from one end of heaven unto the other.

Brethren, let not that day overtake you as a thief. For ye are all the children of the light and of the day; and it is not God's will that any of you should be surprised. Therefore spend your days not in the world's way—most of all, not in strife and envying,—but in meekness, and patience, and hope. And now unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, One God, be ascribed in the Church all honour and glory, all might, majesty, dominion, and blessing, now, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON II.

THE LIVING SACRIFICE.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."—ROM. xii. 1, 2, 3.

WHAT is the exact force of these words of St. Paul—"I say through the grace given unto me"? He does not allude merely to the grace of his personal salvation. Nor, does he allude to that grace of God by which he was enabled to live in holiness, and in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor to any peculiar, superior saintship, to which he had attained personally. No, he means the grace of apostleship, by which he was made a master-builder in the house of God, and had the duty imposed upon him of speaking as he was about to speak; and not the duty only, but the spiritual grace and power to speak it aright, and to speak it effectually.

You will understand what I mean, when I say,

that one of you cannot turn round upon his neighbour who is sitting beside him, or upon his friend with whom he is accustomed to have familiar intercourse—one of you cannot turn round, and say,—friend, brother, I say, through the grace given unto me—think soberly—according as God has dealt to you the measure of faith. You might give the advice, if you had a meek friend who was able to bear your speaking to him so; but you could not add—"I say, by the grace given unto me." No grace of personal character, no attainment of holiness, no talents or abilities, can give you a right so to speak.

You will understand it still more clearly by an example. In your own houses, among your children, domestics, and dependants, you are accustomed to speak with authority, to expect immediate obedience and to receive immediate obedience. But if a stranger, or if one of your children, or domestics, should stand up, and speak as you speak to your household, and attempt to exercise a similar authority, you would resent it as intolerable interference, and your house would feel no power in it. Perhaps the intruder speaks what ought to be spoken, reproves what ought to be reproved, does what you should have done had you been a more faithful parent and head of your house. Nay, perhaps he has spoken the very thing which, if spoken and commanded by you, would have saved your household from falling into a sinful course, with its confusion and its misery. But his word has been of no use. Nay, it has

done evil and not good—for he could not add, "I say, through the grace given unto me." Perhaps he was a holy man, a most pious devoted man, a man whose prayers have brought down upon your house innumerable blessings, which you yourselves were too careless to ask for, too ungracious to acknowledge God as the Author of them: such a man he may be; yet his word is of no use, it is worse than useless. It provokes scorn, resistance; whereas the *same* word spoken by yourself, would have had the power of God with it, would have commanded obedience, would have saved your house; because you could have added—"I say through the grace given unto me." And why is the word of a man to his own house better, more forcible, than the same word addressed to them by a stranger? The reason is, because God is the Author of human society. It is by Him that men are set, not solitary, but gathered into families. It is by His constitution that men are ushered into the world through parents, are subject to them—morally bound to honour and obey them. And Christianity has not displaced nature, nor superseded it. It contains a recognition of it. It has sent upon it a blessing, a help, a sanctity. The natural parent, without Christianity, had a blessing from God. The Christian parent has still more—even a spiritual grace and power. He has a spiritual grace towards those whom God has placed in that relationship to him; and he has a spiritual power over them. His word among them has power in

it. The commandment is, "Honour thy father and thy mother"—thine own, not another's—thy father, not thy father's zealous friend. The father's word has power in it. The same word, spoken in circumstances similar in every respect, except this one respect, of the divinely constituted relationship, is of no use, is without power. He cannot do the good in his neighbour's house, but he can do it in his own.

And, when I say there is power in his word, I do not mean the power of reason, or the power of force, fear, and compulsion; but I mean that its effects flow; I mean that God makes it effectual, and it returns not void. As the power of God was in that word which He spake, saying, "Let there be light;" so in every *word* of God is power—and in every word, duly spoken, in the fitting circumstances, and at the fitting time, in the faith of God's name, by the fitting person, where God has set him, there also is power, the power of God. I grant that this is very little seen; but I speak not of what is to be seen or witnessed, I speak of the intention of God. This domestic grace is not seen—the power and efficacy of it is not seen, because of the ignorance of men, because of their unbelief, because of their unspirituality—not because of the untruth of my assertion, nor because of unfaithfulness in God.

You now understand, then, what St. Paul meant by the words, "I say, through the grace given unto me." And in case you should wish a proof that that is the meaning of it, I shall refer you to

the first chapter of this Epistle, v. 1, 3, 4, 5, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; by whom we have received *grace* and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name." And in first Corinthians iii. 10, "According to the *grace* of God, which is given unto me as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation." Grace, he says, and apostleship; the grace of God which is given me as a wise master-builder. The grace of which he speaks, then, is the grace of God, calling, entitling, and enabling him to act and speak as an apostle. He is going to teach and exhort them about sound mindedness—for that is the meaning of "soberly,"—in their way of thinking about themselves, and about their places in the body of Christ. He is going to teach them to be content with that place in the building of God, which God has assigned to each of them—to be diligent in their calling in the Church—not intruding into the callings of others—not taking places for themselves. He has a right to teach them. For his grace is that of a master-builder. His calling is, to place the lively stones in their places in the spiritual building, and to keep them there. He is not intruding—*he* is not out of *his* place in directing them to keep *their* places.

Another would be so—one of *them* would be so,—if he said the same thing that the apostle says. It may be very necessary that it should be said. St. Paul may not be there to say it. Yet the private person could not say it. He might wish it to be said—he might pray for its being said—he might humbly suggest it—he might meekly say it to his neighbour or his friend. But St. Paul says it, speaks it with authority, to *every* man that is among them. St. Paul stands to the Church in a divine relation, as you stand toward your children. God has constituted him in that relation, as He has constituted you in your relation of parent. And as you have grace, in all, and for all which a parent ought to say and do, so St. Paul has for that which an apostle ought to say and do: and as God is faithful to you, and sends His power along with your faithful words and acts as a parent; so God is faithful to St. Paul, and sends His power along with His faithful words and acts as an apostle. He speaks where God set him to speak, the words which God would have to be spoken, and therefore he knows that he beats not the air, but speaks effectually.

Such, then, is the meaning of that word, "I say through the grace given unto me." He speaks with authority, and with the power of God. Let this stir us up to hear and understand. For his word was effectual through God then, when he wrote it to the Romans; and as a written word of an apostle it stands. God has preserved it, and

sent it down to us; to whom therefore may He grant that it be now effectual.

We have said that St. Paul is speaking here in his office, as a master-builder, and he is going to exhort the disciples concerning humility, dutifulness, contentment, in their several places where they had been set, or might be set in the body of Christ. But he first lays a broad foundation. All abiding in the body of Christ, and profitable occupying of places in the Church, depends upon a sacrifice being presented, and a service being rendered. The word here used for "sacrifice" literally means a thing devoted, brought to the temple, slain by the priest, and offered to God. The word "service" means holy service—service of God—service which is worship. That is the meaning of these two words in this passage. And the meaning of the whole is—I beseech you to perform that which is your true worship of God, as reasonable creatures, capable of worshipping Him intelligently. And the true intelligent worship of God is, to present, to deliver up, to devote your bodies as victims to Him, with the life that He has given you, in the holiness that He has conferred upon you through the gift of the Holy Ghost, in the well pleasingness that He has made you partakers of in His beloved Son—to sacrifice your bodies as victims, to be evermore His and not yours, to be evermore in His power and for His pleasure, to be evermore used by Him, disposed of by Him, in the body of His Son Jesus Christ. There is a continual personal worship of God by every individual,

which is presupposed in speaking of the body of Christ—presupposed, indispensable; without which, the Church cannot be builded, and exhortations about the special duties of men in particular offices, places, and memberships in the body, would be idle and vain. And that worship is—each man's sincere absolute surrender of his body to be for God and for none else.

Men are apt to despise their bodies. All religions which spring up out of the doctrines and commandments of men, at least *neglect* the body. Men are always talking about immortal souls, and their preciousness, their exclusively expressed preciousness, as if the body were an accident, a hull at best, perhaps an encumbrance. But St. Paul does not speak so. And for a good reason. How are you to serve God? How are you to act? God is to be served by acting. You do not serve God by thinking, meditating, contemplating. These are good things, but they are not perfect, they have not their end in themselves. They are perfected in acts. And acts cannot be performed except by the body. You say in your heart, "I will praise God," but with your lips you praise Him. The dead praise not God, nor they that go down into silence. You say in your heart, "I will keep all Thy commandments," but it is with your hands you do them. It is with your feet that you run in His ways. It is with your mouth that you witness a good confession. When our Lord came into the world, He came full of God's holiness. He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God; and

Thy law is within My heart." But He said at the same time, "a body hast Thou prepared for Me." He took a true body and a reasonable soul; and with His reasonable soul that divine person did from first to last offer unto God His holy body, and with His body speak, and do, and suffer the will of God. The angels worship God otherwise; we know not how. We are creatures made differently from them, for a different service. Such worship as angels offer, and such worship as men are to offer, are quite different from one another—yea as different as are the creatures who present it. The Son of God Himself, when He came to fulfil God's law, received a body—took a body. That body He continually offered to God, as an instrument of acting out the will of God. By that body He did fulfil the will of God. And "we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Christ once." And *we* are to follow *Him*. He pleased the Father. He really executed the will of the Father. And it is by doing as He did, that we shall please the Father, and execute the will of the Father. And that is, with our minds, with our understandings, reasonably serving—rationally, intelligently serving and worshipping God, we are continually to give up to Him our bodies, so that living in these bodies, we may *keep* them for Him alone, and for His holy will: we may use them for Him alone, and for His holy will, we may permit them and all their powers to be used by Him alone, and for Him alone.

My brethren, that is the true worship of God

as man can render worship. Otherwise men are divided. Without that offering of the body to God, there are separate interests within a man, and contrary pleasures. There is the interest and the pleasure of the mind, and there are those of the body, and they are contrary to one another. There is the interest and will of God, and the interest and will of man. There is always the striking of an agreement, or a compromise between the two; a measuring out to God only of His measure. There is a considering of how far we may allow ourselves in the one direction, and to what point we *must* for salvation's sake reach in the other direction. Dear brethren, you know this. And what does it arise from? It arises from two things—a passing by of the body as the offering that is to be offered by a reasonable man to God—and an ignorance that grace and providence, the natural and the spiritual, the things of time and the things of eternity are all parts of the will and working of the same God. Men always shrink from an impossible task. We cannot serve this holy God—said the Jews. Always, unbelief says, "Thou art an hard master." They will do this much—but that more they do not. The rich man had a mind to serve God, and he pleased Jesus—but he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. It was not anything about his soul that he saw a difficulty in, but something about his body—his possessions. He could not see how he could ever do without them. An offering of his heart he thought that he was

ready to make. But how to possess for God and under God—he comprehended not.

And men say—my body is unprofitable. How can I present *it* to God? I can understand my being called upon to offer myself: but what means this—offering my body? It *must* be a figure of speech. It must mean, *myself.* What can God do with my body? So men do reason and despise their bodies. And what is the consequence? Why, that their bodies, not presented unto God, continue to be the instruments of sin: hinderers of holiness, instead of expressers of holiness; tyrants, instead of subject, humble fulfillers of the will of God, in the will of the reasonable man.

Now, when a victim was presented to God in the temple, what happened to it? The fire consumed it. And God smelled a sweet savour, and He accepted it. And when you present your bodies a living sacrifice, what shall happen to them? When you continually, daily, habitually, are in the act of presenting your bodies unto God, in the mercies of God, in the name of Jesus which giveth the smell of a goodly savour, then the Holy Ghost cometh upon them; sin is put away from them; the struggle of a separate interest is sweetly silenced; the offered body is as it were given back to you by God, accommodated to that will of His which you are to employ it in performing. With man it is impossible—but with God all things are possible. Sanctification is not confined to the soul or to the spirit. The Holy Ghost is God. He is

related to all His creatures—and He works upon the body also. Say not that your body is unprofitable—but "glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are His."

And then to the body so offered unto God, and so sanctified by the Holy Ghost, all nature is changed—all nature is sanctified. For the same God is found in them both. They are both made holy. To the pure all things are pure. All things are by Him and for Him. The earth is the Lord's—not Satan's. Its occupations are of God. Its relationships and its ordinances are of God. The powers and instincts of men are from God. The very desires and creature propensities are from God. Lo! where all was darkness light hath sprung up; and the harmony of God's acting has unfolded itself. All things are found to be of God, and to testify of Christ. Nature, with its arrangements and ordinances, points to the kingdom of heaven, and is full of parables concerning it. The senses, which had formerly been only the inlet of harassing temptation, have, through continual sanctification of the Holy Ghost, become means of perceiving God in all His works, and of discovering His ways. And life and its events, the creation and its objects, human society itself, which had been but so many sources of moral disturbance and provocatives of sin, do now draw forth the divine charities with which the heart is filled; provoke to pity and to good works, to supplications, and intercessions, and thanksgivings; and they exercise the heart with hope and desire

for the coming and kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

So was it with our blessed Lord in this world. He who by the Holy Ghost was conceived in the womb of the Virgin, was also by the Holy Ghost thus filled in His creature part with this divine light. Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot unto God. Not only at last, but always. For it is by the Holy Ghost that God acts upon the creature. God made the worlds —but it was by the Son that He made them; and the thing being thus made—it was the Spirit of God that moved on the face of the waters. In like manner God sent His Son to save men. The Son took flesh of the Virgin—but it was by the Holy Ghost that He took it. It was by the Holy Ghost that He was conceived. And when He had in that way assumed humanity and taken the creature into the unity of His own eternal single person, the order of God was still preserved. Through the Holy Ghost He acted in and by His flesh. By the Holy Ghost He kept it and presented it without spot unto God. By the Holy Ghost He went about and beheld men—His own creatures—pitying them, helping them. Yea, even after His resurrection, it was by the Holy Ghost that He gave commandment unto the apostles whom He had chosen. In short, we see that the Lord Jesus Christ as man, did, by the Holy Ghost, with holy senses perceive the creature, hear it, handle it, and in every way become sensible to it, and go out and in among the men

that were around Him: and, although all this outward thing was in its actual state the very dwelling-place of corruption, the theatre of a moral ruin, the source of sin and incentive to wickedness, before which every living man before Him had fallen—yet by the Holy Ghost He walked in the midst of it in purity, and found there only the subject of divine meditations, the object of divine affections.

And so it shall be with you—if you present your bodies a living sacrifice. That same Holy Ghost He sends upon you. The fire ever burns upon the altar of God. By the Holy Ghost you shall see as Jesus saw. What He by the Holy Ghost did in His own body, the same He by the Holy Ghost will do in your bodies. Your bodies shall be dead—as to sin—not as to anything else—but as to sin—by the continual presence of the Holy Ghost. This is it unto which you were brought in your baptism. St. Paul exhorts all who are baptized into Christ to reckon their bodies to be dead unto sin. It was the will of your parents and all that they could do for you, to offer you a living sacrifice. They offered you to God, that, through the power of God in that divine ordinance, you might be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ. Through the will of your parents, you came into existence; into a sinful existence in the midst of a sinful world; yourselves sinful, able only to see sin and the temptations to sin with which a fallen world was teeming. They were responsible to

provide you with some better thing, if it were possible for them to do so; for must it not be intolerable for a human heart to think of being, in any wise, cause of existence only for misery, sin, and blackness of darkness for ever? Therefore, they brought you to the font of holy baptism; they offered you there, that you might receive forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost, that the mercies of God might come upon you. And you did there receive the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost: for when was any man or child brought to Jesus, and sent away with a refusal? There you came a passive, unresisting infant: and now your life is a continuance of that act. What you passively did in the arms of your faithful parents, you now do as the continual act of your will, actively, of the purpose of your own heart; you continually present your bodies a living sacrifice; and, as continually, the faithful One sends forth the Spirit of His Son in your hearts, that you may be holy as He is holy.

And what was the end of Him, who was alive only unto God? It was actual death. He would not sin—and therefore sin demanded His life. He would not conform to this world, to the sinful order of things, and the world demanded His life. He would not[1] *fit into the scheme* of this world. He also had a *scheme*, and that was the holy and acceptable and perfect will of God. "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God, and Thy law is within mine heart." And the world had a scheme—

[1] Συσχηματιζομαι

which was to do the will of the flesh—to fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind—to make the fallen earth a habitation wherein the flesh might be pleased, the senses gratified, evil shut out, comfort, ease, refinement, indulgence, if possible luxury, attained—putting far off the evil day. There they lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall: they chaunt to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music like David; they drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments, and say to their souls, "thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." And around these prosperous ones are the envious ones, gnashing their teeth in disappointed covetousness; and the still hopeful ones, jostling, scrambling up after them. And underneath all are the wretched whom *their* superfluities leave in poverty, whom their haste to be rich makes them overlook, whom the demands of their luxury make it necessary for them to grind, whom they, because their scheme is purely selfish, *must* turn aside in the gate from their right. And where, all the while, are the keepers of the oracles and of the law of God? Are they part of this system? Woe betide them if they are not! Woe in this world. They are not fit to live. But there is a difference. If they also devour widows' houses, they at least make long prayers. If they forget the weightier matters of

the law, they are careful to tithe the mint, and anise and cummin. If they rebuke not in the gate, and fail to speak uprightly; if they afflict the just and meek; if they accept the bribe, and sell to him that will consent to be of their party an accommodation of God's word, a gloss, a cloak, a relaxation, and all for the gems, the purple, or the gold that he can give: they will take care that He who is not of their party, shall not heal or open the eyes of the blind on the Sabbath day—shall not cast out devils, without being condemned as Himself a demoniac—shall not call God His Father, without perishing for His blasphemy. Yes—through the unfaithful priests—man has got the mastery of the law of God. Even Moses shall serve the lusts of men. The scheme of this age is too mighty even for the fiery law.

But our blessed Lord would not fit into this scheme. They who had fitted the law of the absent Moses to the world's scheme, could not fit Him to it. He hurt no man, He thrust Himself upon no man. He went about continually doing good. He judged no man—He condemned no man. "A man approved of God among you," says St. Peter. "He grew in favour with God and with men." The heathen judge declared that he found no fault in Him. Yet He was an offence—and the offence was intolerable to all men. Even he who justified Him, decreed that He should be slain. A light was about Him which made men conscious that darkness was that in which they were living. His life revealed the death in which

the world was lying. He will not accommodate Himself to this world. He has presented His body unto God. The Holy Ghost, the fire of God is perpetually there. He has refused the bribes of our prince. The prince of this world offered Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and He would not have them, for He willed to worship God and serve Him alone. Satan said —This Thou shalt have, if Thou wilt but honour me with Thy body—bow the knee to me. But He said—I will bow the knee to God—I have presented My body unto God. The world—all of the world that had an opportunity of coming in contact with Him—and all the world if it could have come in contact with Him would have done the same—felt that here was a person hateful, not to be endured. The world cannot go on if He is to remain in it. If He live, the axe is laid to the root of our tree. He is a rock of offence. Let the stone of stumbling be removed. Let the gin and the snare be torn up, and our own ways be made safe and easy for us again. The scheme of this world requires it. All mankind with one voice demand it. And they prevail. The Just One dies. Sin by the hand of man slays the Holy One of God.

And they went their way. Now shall the world go on as we would wish it. This was the heir. We have killed Him, and the inheritance shall be ours. Now shall all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. Such song of triumph sang the world for a few days. But God

raised Him from the dead. He is not shewn openly —but to such only as should be witnesses of His resurrection. Secretly, invisibly—in the midst of the men who had clamoured for His death,—in the midst of the men who are rejoicing that they have for ever rid themselves of Him,—He goes to and fro. He is mortal no longer. He has brought forth His clay. He has not forsaken it; but brought it forth, a thing which the hand of man cannot hold—cannot nail to a tree any more. But He appears not to *them*. He will not force men to believe in Him. God has every respect to the free will and independent responsibility of man. He hath made him reasonable, and He will have reasonable service or none. He shall approach them in a way of witness, and every honest mind shall receive the witness. But to them who already believe in Him, who believed in Him in His body of mortality, to them He shews Himself; and He makes them His witnesses; and ordains them to be witnesses of His resurrection. And He appears to them during forty days, and speaks to them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. And then He is caught up out of their sight, and He is seated at the right hand of God. The unconscious world is whirling on, serving its diverse lusts and pleasures, nay, at the present time it is singing pæans of triumph, ignorant of all this. They only hear a rumour that the disciples have contrived to steal away the body of Him whom they had killed.

But that grain of wheat—thus sown in the

earth, when it died it sprang not up alone. He has sprung up an army of mighty men. He has become an altar on whom men may present their bodies unto God—a living sacrifice. And some men have received grace to do so. And the fire of God which burned upon Him, has come down upon them also. A new thing, a larger thing has appeared. All Jerusalem is disturbed again. Twelve men, after a new manner, contrary to the scheme of this world, are, in the tongues of all the world,—intelligible no longer to Jews alone, but to all men—speaking the wonderful works of God. All are amazed—all are in doubt—and say one to another, what meaneth this? We thought that we had cleared out this disorderly thing out of the world—and lo! it reappears manifold.

Some satisfy themselves—easy, sensual men—so-called judicious and penetrating men; and they say, "those men are filled with new wine." Some remain—men of meeker sort—to whom St. Peter explains how that grain of wheat had sprung up. He bears witness to them of the resurrection, and calls upon them to save themselves from that untoward generation. And in that one day their small company is increased by the addition of three thousand souls. All these forsook the course of this world and presented their living sacrifice, and the fire of God came down upon them also; and fear came upon every soul; and signs and wonders were done in the name of that crucified, risen Jesus. And the priests and rulers doubt whereunto this may grow. They threaten, they imprison,

they scourge, but the fire has been kindled and they cannot tread it out. Men, rejecting the course of this world, with converted minds, offer their bodies unto God, and are thereupon filled—used—by the Holy Ghost. They are indwelt of God. By their lips God speaks, and none can gainsay or resist. It is truth, it is burning truth that pours from their lips. It is truth, quick and powerful, shedding revelation around it; disclosing, unveiling, detecting, reaching to the joints and the marrow. By their hands the blind are made to see, and the lame to walk, the dead are raised, the hypocrites are stricken with death. "What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest, and we cannot deny it." Aye—ye rulers of the scheme of this world—ye denied the resurrection. Ye gave large money to the soldiers, and they took the money, and did as they were taught. "But what shall we do to these men?" Ye may well ask that. They belong to another world, and they would have you all to forsake your world, and to save yourselves from this untoward generation. The powers of the world to come are in them, and hence come these notable miracles which ye know not how to meet. Your large money will not help you with men who are selling their possessions and goods, and laying them at the Apostles' feet, and holding all things for common, and dividing unto every man severally as he hath need. "Let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this Name."

Ah! ye little know that it is the new creation that hath come in among you. Haply—thinks Gamaliel—ye are striving against God. Speak henceforth to no man in this Name! As well might ye have attempted to hide the world in the day when it was created. As well might *you* have decreed, that darkness should still cover the earth in the day when God said, "Let there be light."

You slew that Man—in your ignorance ye did it—ye people and your rulers. But God raised Him from the dead. That Man is at the right hand of God. You accomplished for your part what God had fore-ordained. But that Man was He of whom David spake, when he said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." And God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory. And His Name, through faith in His Name, does all these wonders. Every knee shall bow to it, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord. It is the Name that is written upon the new creation. In Him that new creation has begun. You could not have concealed the old creation in the day when the heavens and the earth were created. Think not, O foolish men, to *decree* that the second great act of God shall be hid. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." These men are not going about with a curious tale to be added to the history of the world. Nor are they zealots of a new fragmentary, ephemeral doctrine, excogitated for men's minds to think of. These men are the

presence of the new creature in the midst of the old. They are one with Him who is at God's right hand—He is in them, and they in Him (Eph. ii. 2, 5, 6, 10). That Jesus whom you slew, He it is whom you are persecuting and kicking against. Put all these men to silence. Shut them up in your prisons. Stone them as blasphemers, let the graves cover them. You cannot lay hold on Him who is seated at the right hand of God. Ye would if ye could, but ye cannot. The new creation is begun, and ye cannot put a stop to it. Rather "Kiss ye the Son, lest He be angry and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little."

Well, they would not kiss the Son. Jerusalem would not become the city of God. They adhered to the course of this world. And they perished by a tremendous, by an unexampled overthrow. And the new creature grew and spread over the earth, and that Name was proclaimed. Their line is gone through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. From among the Gentiles is taken a people for His Name. A seed serveth Him, and it is counted to the Lord for a generation. The second Adam takes to Himself a family from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. In them He is on the earth —as He was in those first days, only more largely, more mightily. The so-called Church, His body, is still the new creature. The visible Church is the presence of the new creature on the earth. His Name is the same. Faith in His Name is the

same. He is still at the right hand of God. That witness is still true which so disturbed the course and scheme of this world—which this world and its rulers could not bear.

But here meets us a tremendous problem. The Church, Christendom, is living just as that Jewish world was living when it slew the Lord of Glory. All the earth is at rest and is quiet, undisturbed, fulfilling its old course, its old scheme. It is exactly the same selfish, grasping, lustful, ambitious, envious, oppressive, unjust, discontented, revengeful, hypocritical world that it was then. Nay worse—because of the powers of the world to come, of which the Church inherits possession. Selfishness, ambition, envy, have laid hold of spiritual power, and trafficked with the Name of Jesus. The selfish against the selfish—the ambitious Church against the ambitious Church. This is their course. The course of *this* world has come in upon the things of God. It has come in, and it is undisturbed. It finds nothing that it cannot subdue. There are a few disputes *within* that course, a few jostlings of men, who come in one another's way. But none questions the course. They have given the Name of Jesus to the course of this world—of this age. The creed has become a *tradition.* The resurrection has become a *doctrine.* As they prevailed against Moses when his law was turned into a tradition ; so it looks as if they had prevailed against Christ. And sin hath come in like a flood and swept all before it. Your sons and your daughters are swept away

with it. Those innocents who lay on your arms, as you brought them to the font of baptism, and dedicated them to the Lord—have turned aside to a life of riot and revelling: they cast off shame, and exceed even heathen wickedness. You cannot stay it—your schools, your catechisms, your sermons have not stayed it. You see a population around you ready to burst all bands, and to cast away every yoke. And what do men say? Let us educate them—let us feed them—let us enfranchise them—let us send missionaries among them. All good things perhaps. At all events, *all* clear confessions of the state into which these poor sheep of Christ have come. And may God prosper your good intentions.

But are not even you, with your good intentions and your good efforts, yourselves somewhat conformed to the world. The world may do all that. Nay, the world sees as far as you do there—and it does all that. Yet it does not help itself. Its devices and its sins are all but parts of one and the same thing, the course of this world. Hath the new creation no higher action than this? Perhaps then we have all fallen away from our high duty, and forgotten our reasonable service. Our bodies are not presented to God—and the fire of the altar does not burn in them. Reason speaks by our lips, benevolence speaks by them, doctrine, tradition, speak by them, but does the LIVING GOD speak by them? Is it to the Man Jesus Christ, at the right hand of God, that our powers are surrendered, and who acteth through our will, by

our powers? Is it He—one with us—present in us—that giveth us a mouth and wisdom, such as all adversaries cannot gainsay or resist? If so, how is the world and its course so quiet? They say no longer "what meaneth this?" They say no longer "what shall we do to these men?" For of a truth God is hidden even by those who fear Him in these generations. And here lies the solution of our problem, a sad solution of a serious problem. For perhaps the salt hath lost its savour, and what can be done *then?*

Dear brethren, the thing to be done is to stir up divine hope and charity in our bosoms, and to let Christian men know what they are. To tell them that they *are one* with Him who is at the right hand of God, that they *are* parts of the new creature, that Jesus *is* in them and they in Him. That He *would* live in them, walk in them, speak by them, bless by them; by them do His mighty acts and witness of His resurrection. That they *are* members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and that He *hath* sent upon them His Holy Spirit.

This—this would free them. This is the enfranchisement that would meet their necessity and content them. They are in bondage. And *true* it is they *need* to be made free. But it is to the world they are in bondage, to the course of the world, to the scheme of the world; and they need to be helped to forsake it, not in one of its *forms*, but in its *essence*, not individually alone, but as one man, not corporeally, locally, mentally, but

spiritually. And they need to be encouraged by the mercies of God to present their bodies a living sacrifice unto God. They need to be encouraged, not to be taught merely, but encouraged, yea, "besought" to come with that reasonable worship. Then would the Lord reappear on the earth, and the new creature again make itself conscious.

Our readers must open their eyes and discover that men are weary of the mere doctrine of the Gospel, and of all who deal in mere doctrine. They will sweep them all away. They know that God is not the author of a philosophy, not the revealer of abstractions. They feel that it is an operation which they stand in need of, and not an abstraction. They will sweep away the abstractions and all them that deal in abstractions.

But the facts, the crucified One, the risen Lord, the given Spirit, the body of Christ, the new creation, these facts shall stand, and they that hold them and proclaim them shall not be swept away.

And now unto God the Father, &c.

SERMON III.

THE GOOD, AND ACCEPTABLE, AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."—ROM. xii. 1, 2, 3.

IN our former meditation of this passage of Holy Scripture, we saw that the Christian man's office as a reasonable creature is to devote and offer his body unto God; to worship God by presenting his body to Him sacrificially, that it may be for God's use, and for the accomplishment of God's will. This is the continual personal worship by which each man is to prepare himself for every other act of worship and of obedience.

It is by the mercies of God that this is made possible. It is because God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto

men their trespasses, that sinful man can come near to Him, or present anything to Him, or even so much as think of Him.

First, the body of Jesus Christ was once offered, and He by His blood opened for us a way and an access unto God; so that we can both speak unto God, and endure when He speaketh unto us. Those bodies which hitherto had been yielded unto sin and employed in doing the will of the creature, we may, in consequence of His death, offer unto God with certainty of acceptance.

And then, they who have come unto God by Him are made alive along with Him. For God raised Him from the dead. God accepted *His* offering, and He "was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." So God accepts their offering which they offer in the faith of Him, and makes them partakers of His resurrection. Those who come unto God in the faith of His mercies, He makes one with Christ, and from Christ there flows upon them a participation of that which the Father has bestowed upon Him—not acceptance only, but new life, eternal life. For He being raised from the dead dieth no more, can no more be a man of sorrows, or acquainting Himself personally with grief, but abideth eternally, as man, in the fruition of the Father's love. And they that are by God made one with Him, are *made* alive with Him, *continue* eternally alive with Him, and through Him have that same fruition of the Father's love. The Holy Ghost cometh from Jesus upon those who are one with Him,

abides with them, makes them holy as He is holy. And the fruit or consequence of this sacrifice and of God's acceptance and of the presence of the Holy Ghost is, first, separation from the scheme of this world or age, which is the age of "doing the will of the flesh and of fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind"; and, secondly, transformation.

Transformation signifies change of outward appearance. Form is that which is visible. The form of a man's life is that which is expressed through his body, and which other men through their bodily senses are able to perceive. The natural form of man is the likeness of fallen Adam. Adam begat a son in his own likeness. Such as the fallen parent was, such was the son. He who is joined unto Christ the second Adam, receives his form from the risen Jesus. Such as *He* would be if He were on the earth, such should be those who have been united unto Him; like Him in character, using their bodies and bodily powers as He would use His, and to express those things which He would express. Like Him in *character*, not, as yet, in condition: for we are still in bodies of sin and death, although we have the first fruits of the Spirit.

But the transformation, or change of form, of outward action and expression arises from renewing of the mind or intelligence. The mind of him who is united to the risen Jesus is enabled to perceive and understand things as Jesus perceives and understands them. He has, in his

measure, the mind of Christ. He has the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of his understanding being enlightened. Jesus said—"Lo I come to do Thy will, and Thy law is within mine heart." He knew the purpose and intentions of His Father. He was not a blind and formal keeper of the *law* of God, but a performer of the *will* of God. He was indeed obedient and submissive. He had regard to the authority of God, but He also perceived the mind of God in each thing that God required. That is the meaning of the words—"that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." We are lifted up through union with Christ into a participation of that discernment of the will of God. We are thereby delivered from bondage to a verbal and external law, and are under grace, as it is called, that is to say, we have the law within our hearts. We are exalted into a sympathy with the mind of Christ the lawgiver. We prove, discern, approve, and will the things which God wills. Naturally we will other things, and the law of God is to the natural man a system of prohibitions and injunctions. But spiritually, the new man, in the light of God, wills, chooses—*himself* prohibits and enjoins the things which God wills, chooses, prohibits, and enjoins.

The will of God is one: by which I do not merely mean that He wills to-day and to all eternity the same things which He willed yesterday and from all eternity. But I mean that all God's words and actings, all His commandments and

ordinances are the manifold expression of one and the same thing, and have one and the same object. We live in the world, and the world has a certain natural constitution, and certain natural relationships. Mankind are all bound together by certain ties, domestic, social, political. The Church is bound together by certain ties in like manner. And what I want to impress upon you is this, that fundamentally these are all one, or rather of one —so that natural ties and bonds, and spiritual ties and bonds, are not contrary to one another, but in harmony with, nay necessary to one another. And the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God is not the latter in contradistinction to the former, but it is the one thing of which both are expressions. It is not more good, acceptable, and perfect, to fulfil the one, than it is to fulfil the other. But to fulfil either at the *expense* of the other, or to the *neglect* of the other, is neither good, acceptable, nor perfect. It is good in the priest to wait at the altar, and it is good in the market-man to attend the market. The faithful pastor who feeds the flock which God has committed to him is holy in his act; the faithful husband, the faithful parent is holy in his. The one is not more holy than the other. Each is doing the will of God. Each in his place is doing the will of God. But if a son say when his parent asks for his help, or his time, or anything that he can do for him, it is Corban—I have devoted it to God—I have purposed in my heart to serve God with that—with that portion of my time, or with that money, or with that use of

my faculties, and therefore I cannot meet your wishes or your necessities in the thing which you require; such a son is not doing the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, but is setting grace and nature in opposition, and is saying, that the will of God is not one, that the God of nature and the God of the Church are not one.

The history of the Church has shewn the great need of this renewing of the mind. The term has, indeed, been occasionally misunderstood and turned aside from its practical point, as if the mind should be renewed to discern spiritual things to the despising of natural; to the preferring of one part of the will of God to another part of it: as if it was much more holy to pray than it is to do the work of a carpenter; more pleasing to God to go to Church when you ought than to go to your field or your merchandise when you ought. By means of which false use of Scripture the Church has been made a reprover, not of sin, but of the good will of God—a discourager of men from the ways of God, instead of a helper of men in the ways of God. The clergy have been set aloft in a region of sanctity, while the laity were viewing themselves as unavoidably defiled with the contact of unholy things; whereby, on the one hand, has been generated much pride, puffing men up in their own conceits and hypocrisy; and on the other, an habitual uncleanness of conscience, most oppressive to the heart, most ruinous and destructive to the character. We are in the world. We are parts of the system of civil, social, and domestic

life. Human society has its demands upon us. God enlightens our minds to see that system (notwithstanding all the deformities which man's will has engrafted on it) to be from Him. It is an expression of His will. Its demands are an expression of His will. We must meet them. To meet them aright, to meet them better than natural men can meet them, He gives us His grace. Not to evade them, not to do something else instead, not to prefer some spiritual function to the natural function, but to meet and answer these natural obligations—for that end—grace is given us by Him. The Church has, for one of its offices, to help us in the patient, assiduous fulfilment of these obligations. You pray in the Church that you may be good parents, good children, good subjects, good magistrates, good men of business; as well as good members of the Church, good ministers, or good intercessors. A man has no right, indeed, to burden himself voluntarily with so great an amount of secular business, as to render it impossible for him to yield a salutary portion of his time to the cultivation of his spirit. A man has no right to follow the leadings of business any more than he has to follow the leadings of pleasure. He is to be master, and not servant, of the world. If he make mammon serve him and obey him and yield to his will; if he hold the rule over his occupations which naturally accumulate, and spread, and complicate themselves, and over his affections which naturally engross and captivate the spirit; he does well

and keeps his truest Christian liberty. But if a man load himself with thick clay, and, under pretext of duty, add to his toils and his labours beyond nature and necessity, he is deceiving himself and falling back again into the service of the course of this world, and can expect no divine help in such exorbitant occupations.

Yet let no one wipe his mouth and say, "I have been slothful in business, but I am not a sinner, for I have been fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Do not say, I will *limit* within certain bounds my response to the demands of society, because I must give so much of my strength and so much of my time to the worship of the Church or to its affairs. And, wherefore, then, have you come to Church? To worship God, to meet with God, to see that He be magnified and praised. Very well. And nothing more? Yes, I say, so long as you are in this world, for something more; namely, to receive grace that you may use the talent which God has given you in meeting the demands of human society. You receive grace in answer to these prayers, to enable you to meet God in the world of mankind, as well as in the Church. Does not our blessed Lord say, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil"? Be assured that you have no right to hide any talent in a napkin. You have no right to bury any part of your Lord's money. You have no right to say, I will satisfy this claim, and I will not satisfy that claim. You receive grace in

the Church to meet and satisfy all claims; and holiness is the satisfying not of spiritual claims alone, but of natural claims also, or rather of all claims in just harmony and proportion, according as God has dealt to each man his own talent and his own grace. I say the Church of God is abused by any *preferring* of its offices, services, or functions, to the plain duties which are under cognizance of the conscience even of the natural man. Nay, not only is the Church of God abused, but the God of nature is blasphemed: nature and grace are set in opposition as if they came from different authors, of unequal holiness, nay of opposite characters.

But some one may say, our Lord commanded His disciples to leave all and follow Him. Yes, and when *He* says *that* to any one, He is the Lord of both nature and grace, and He commands what is just. Those whom He so calls He looses from the one, because He is going to fill their hands with the other. He gives them a place, a function that is incompatible with the occupation in which He finds them. Levi cannot any longer sit at the receipt of custom. James and John can no longer occupy themselves as fishermen. For the Master says He has need of them. And in like manner the Church, *discerning the gifts* of her children, can meet the willingness of their hearts and encourage them to devote themselves to ministerial or other functions, incompatible with the undertaking or the retaining of worldly professions. But as Jesus said not to everyone that

sat at the receipt of custom, "follow Me," but said it only to Levi; and as He said "follow Me," not to all the fishermen on the sea of Tiberias, but to James and John; and as He therein did not condemn nor disregard all other receivers of custom, or all other fishermen, but rather indeed encouraged them as having given forth from among their number a man whom He could call to His hand; so the Church says not to any man, you are unholy because you addict yourselves to a worldly profession, you are negligent and godless, because you give your faculties to the business, or the necessities, or the administration of this present life, and by doing so are constrained to be in the field, or the forum, or the exchange, while we are at the altar; but rather, by taking from among men in worldly professions, or from among their youth, some to place in the ministry of the Church, she encourages those who remain to feel *their* places also to be honourable before God, and holy in His eyes.

But some others may say, We are glad to escape from the business of life, because we find it difficult to keep a clean conscience there. But, dear brethren, if you are unable to preserve a clean conscience in what you call the lower, commoner duties of life, how shall you keep a clean conscience in the higher and more spiritual duties of life? Is it not rather that your consciences are sufficiently alive to shew you your sins and shortcomings in the lower region, and, therefore, in that region they keep you uneasy,

but they are not sufficiently alive to shew you your errors and shortcomings in the spiritual region, and you feel there, or expect to feel, more at ease? Of a truth, the world is, after all, the region of every man's *visible* probation. He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen? Let no man suppose that it is easier to be holy by separation to sacred duties, than it is by waiting upon the necessary offices of human society. It is easier to be unholy without knowing it. That is all.

A sick man always thinks he would be easier in some new position, and so he is always shifting and tossing from one side to another, and from one part of his couch to another; but the fever is the same in every position, and he finds no more ease in the new position than he had felt in the old. Exactly the same is the state of him who says, "I find it difficult to preserve a clean conscience in the business of human life, and *therefore* wish to leave it." It is a vain shifting of your position, and if you are an honest man you will feel your failure still accompany you. The truth is, you are not presenting your body unto God. Your perfect and continual personal act of worship is awanting—is imperfect—is partial—is unwilling. And a merciful God is making you aware of that failure at the foundation, that you may be delivered from it. If you cannot see God and feel yourselves in His hands, and be conscious that you are His servant in the natural and human

employments, how shall you ever see God in the Church, or feel that you are in His hands and His servant, anywhere? You need to have your eyes opened and your minds renewed, for you have not proved what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Do not misapprehend me. I am speaking of those who prefer spiritual offices and functions to secular ones, under the erroneous idea, that they would find it more easy to keep God's will in the former than in the latter. I do not wish to make light of the difficulties of holiness in the midst of a fallen world. On the contrary, when I say that holiness is the observance of the beautiful order and harmony of the divine will, I state as strongly as I can the amount and the nature of these difficulties. The fallen world is in contradiction to all the good ways and ordinances of God. It is in disorder. Human society is in disorder. Law and magistracy affect only outward order, and scarcely prevail to hinder even the more flagrant violations of God's will. But beyond their reach lies the constant force and current of evil, against which he who would be for God must stand, bearing it in patience, or breasting it in steadfastness by the grace of the Holy Ghost. So subtle is the element of corruption that is all around him, it so speaks to his flesh, it is so near to him, so present to his senses, to his fallen instincts and emotions, that he knows no truce, nor rest from his conflict. It comes upon him by his fellowmen, by enemies, and by friends, by strangers, and by

kindred, in the voice of authority, and in the voice of resistance to authority, in all the ways of men and in all the associations of men. Everywhere, in all human things, he endures the contradictions of sinners against himself; and well might fail in that hand-to-hand fight for faith and a good conscience, against infidelity, covetousness, deceit, love of pleasure, lust of power, all embodied and impersonated in men, in multitudes of men, in the men among whom he *must* live—in his own flesh, in which he *must* live. He might well fail but for the knowledge of Him who endured that same contradiction of sinners, and remained a spotless lamb. He may well be permitted to exclaim, my soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword; they have prepared a net for my steps, my soul is bowed down; oh! that I could take wing like a bird, and fly away, and be at rest: and to hope earnestly, and long for that "restitution of all things" to order and beauty which hath been promised, when Jesus shall be sent again, and when the kingdom shall have come, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. But that which will help every man to bear this trial meekly and patiently to the end, is the assurance that he stands where God would have him stand in the discharge of part of that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God; and that His Lord is with him in that furnace.

And, charge your picture of the world's conflict as you will, the spiritual function is a delusive retreat for you; your desire of it is a delusion. Would you flee from fight with the world and the flesh, and be a match for the spiritual wickednesses in high places? You are weary of running with the footmen, and you propose to contend with the horses!

No, every man must put on the whole armour of God, and be ready for any and every service to which God may call him. But every man must see to it that he serve God in his own sphere and in his own place, and do not dream about serving Him in the sphere which has been assigned to his neighbour. No man is permitted to choose for himself a place which has not fallen to him. No man is permitted to lose time in gazing about for a position different from that which God has assigned him. Art thou called being a servant, do that which belongs to a servant. Art thou called being a master, do not descend to a disorderly equality and familiarity with the servant. Art thou called being rich, thou hast no right to make thyself poor. Art thou poor, be not covetous or discontented with thy poverty. God has use for you and for your condition also. Art thou called having a name, a rank, a position of social eminence; do as those who are in that rank and position naturally do—sin ever excepted. Do not despise your position, its influence, or its advantage. Occupy it, assert it, maintain it. Be not anything which one in that social position would not naturally be; go not where one in that

social position would not naturally go; cultivate those men whom you would naturally cultivate. Religion is meant to crown and perfect nature, not to overturn it. The common sense of mankind is part of the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. It is presupposed in all religion. And, still more, do not break your way out of the world into spiritual positions. Every man must serve God in his own order; every man in his own rank. So shall every man have praise of God. By faith of God as the author of order, assigning to every man his own position, jealous over those arrangements which are the expression of His good pleasure, who is present with suitable grace to every man who stands where He has set him, but furnishes no grace to him who stands where he hath proudly set himself; by faith of God must every man stand and do his own work and overcome. For we are under a Captain and Lord who hath overcome: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

How else can you use or interpret the whole of this twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans and the numberless kindred passages of holy Scripture?

Akin to this distinction between the sacred and secular in things, by which God is seen in the one and not in the other—by which holiness is reckoned more attainable in the one than in the other, is another distinction between sacred and common in days, and the idea of being more holy on one day of the week than on another day of

it. There are some who feel so towards one day in seven. There are others who feel so towards feast days, and days of appointed solemnity in the Church. But did the institution of the Sabbath and of its employments stamp unholiness upon six days of the week and their employments? Was God more adorable when He had finished all things, and when He rested on the seventh day, than He was during the six days in which He created and made them all? The Sabbath was not instituted subsequently to the fall or in consequence of the fall. The Sabbath was not instituted because man unavoidably contracted defilement during his days of labour, and needed a day of separation from labour, that he might then practise holiness for a day, or be holily occupied for a day, and so preserve a certain balance. Not at all. But one day in seven was sanctified to shew that every day was holy; and man, the day-labourer man, was admitted on the seventh day to the participation and remembrance of the rest of God, to shew that his labour did not disqualify him from drawing near to God, to shew that his labour was not unholy, but rather a part of the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; and that at some time or other the diligent labourer should enter upon the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

It is a monstrous delusion, a delusion fertile of innumerable hypocrisies and abominable uncleannesses, to suppose that you are serving God on the Sabbath, but not on the other days of the

week; to suppose that worship is the serving of God, and that labour and business is the serving of the world, that in the Church you draw near to God, but that in the counting-room, or the workshop you are less near to Him. You are more strict with yourself on one day in seven. Very well. But that is more properly expressed by saying—you are less strict with yourself six days in seven. No wonder, then, that you find your secular affairs entangle you. You set God before you more during one day in the seven, that is, you set God before you less during six days in the seven. And what is the effect of that? Why, that your Sabbath is a day not of rest, but of effort, of *unusual* effort—of struggle against all the habits of the week, of painful struggle, which makes the day a weariness, and which makes God who sanctified it appear a hard master. It is true that one day in seven is holy unto the Lord; but you are making an untruth out of it, for you are saying the other six are not for the Lord, my occupations on the other six are not for the Lord, God is with me on the one, for its sacred duties, but He is further from me on the others, and I cannot stir up divine graces for the occupation of *them*. God has given you one day in seven for a day of gladness, for reviving your faith in the fact of Christ's resurrection, and for stirring up your hope of the resurrection of the saints, and of the day of rest and restitution of all things, and of the revelation of order and consistency, of harmony and peace, and perfection: and it is made by men a day of

heaviness—a day of burden—a day for filling themselves with the reproaches of an uneasy conscience—a day of self-denial—a day of uncomfortable, doubtful anticipation—a day for discovering how little they are at one with God—a day for thinking of their latter end, perhaps, as men call their death, which after all is no latter end, but rather a moment of middle passage from a changeable to an unchangeable condition. On that day, men, Christian men, retire, and see in what a confusion and uncertainty, in what a mist of doubt and unbelief, of unpreparedness, and disinclination to the good-will of God they are living; and instead of worshipping, they are fearing Him with a sinner's dread; they are putting Him away with the unreconciled man's aversion; they are hearing a little for good-manner's sake, but saying at a more convenient season I will hear further of all this. So, even so, are Christian men, many Christian men doing every week of their lives; and making the day of holy rest a day of worse than labour—because they believe not in the salvation which Jesus worked out in the days of His labour—and of labour so intolerable, that on the least opening, excuse, or apology, they will say, and do say, "Let us break these bands, and cast these cords from us." The fact is, their mind is not fully renewed to discern the entire, large, fundamental will of God, in which all days, and all occupations are embraced, in which the natural and the spiritual are seen together, and the true unity of God Himself is expressed.

I have chosen this practical way of approaching the point of doctrine which I have this day in hand, because I think it will make it more easy for you at once to apprehend, than it would have been had I stated it at the commencement, and illustrated it afterwards. I think you are now prepared to see that Christian transformation is attained by a gracious renewing of the mind, so that in the Holy Ghost a man stands toward all things in a divine point of sight; beholds as it were out of heaven, and in his measure apprehends, that will of God, of which all things are the expression, to express which all things are ordered in that relationship to one another in which they stand, and to express which all things are to be used by those who use them. The holiness of a man consists in *this*, that intelligently and willingly he obeys, and accommodates himself unto, and observes, that disposal and ordering of himself and of all other creatures, which it has pleased God to choose and ordain. God is the author of order, and not of confusion. He has set us a wonderful symbol of that in the firmament of the stars, where myriads of huge bodies are ordered and arranged with mutual relationships and attractions, in continual change of place, with inconceivable velocities, yet harmonized, free from confusion, never interfering with one another. God's law is the revelation of that order, or the preservation of it, in the region of the understanding and the will. To the end that there also His responsible creatures, in their myriads, with their relationships

and attractions, with their numerous movements, and their mighty forces, may similarly harmonize, and be free from confusion, may never interfere with one another, but mutually sustain and bind one another in a holy unity, for *that* end His law is revealed. You know how the word confusion is employed in Holy Scripture, to signify and characterise the worst and grossest forms of wickedness; using things contrary to the will and intention of God is confusion. Contrary to nature is the most palpable way the apostle finds for characterising those things which called for reproof in the churches to which he wrote. Even among men the disturbance of nature in its human instincts and suggestions is seen to be a leading element of criminality in ordinary offences; and the most bronzed face of veteran depravity bends down and blushes at the very word—unnatural offence. Such answer is there even in fallen, fleshly manhood, in its most remote estrangement from God. Such answer to the general idea of the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. But men are ignorant of the entire system of the divine ordination, how it pervades all things, how all things depend upon it, how every interference with it is sin, and how the observance of it in every particular is essential to the holiness of the creature, and to the fulfilment of the divine purposes. That each and every creature should be that which it is, nothing less than what it is meant to be, and nothing more; and that its action should be fully up to its intended point, without

excess, and without defect; that—is essential to the well-being of the universe, and to the attainment of the divine intentions in the whole creation. God has prescribed to everything its own range, its own border, within which it is profitable, beyond which it is worse than useless. To the intelligent creature He has prescribed similar limitations of being and of action—but the intelligent creature is to observe that prescription by an exercise of its choice, consenting to the divine choice, with its own free will embracing the divine ordination.

Now, one exposition of the large order of God is contained in that word, "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Under God, who is over all, blessed for ever, stands, first Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed, in whose person are conjoined Godhead and manhood. God hath given unto Him all power in heaven and in earth—angels and principalities and powers are made subject to Him—He was first made lower than the angels, that God might put all things under His feet. Next to Him stands His body, the Church, through which He is present in the creation; His body is given to Him by the Father. As it pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell, so He has given to Him His body, also called a fulness, an outward fulness for pouring forth the inward by means of it. The Church is called the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. It is a full or complete furniture of instruments through which He may use to the glory of the

Father, all that with which He hath replenished Him. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." They were given to Him out of the world. They are joined unto Him. They are one body in Him; individual members of Him, and members one of another. They are one flesh with Him. One Spirit with Him. That is their position.

Next to them are all other men—among whom the Church is set—the light of the world—that all men may walk in the light. All mankind are not made the body of Christ. Those who are selected to be the body of Christ, they are the body of Christ. This principle was clearly stated by St. James in the council at Jerusalem—"Simeon hath declared," he says, "how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take *out* of them a people for His name." They are called the House of God, the Temple of God. St. John sees them under their perfected form of the New Jerusalem. In the light of it the nations of them which are saved shall walk, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. The Church standing in her place thus, under the Lord Jesus Christ, over men, and among men, is seen of angels. Through the Church, unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, is now to be made known the manifold wisdom of God. After men, and through men, follows the rest of the creation. That is set first, of which the Son of God took, when He became incarnate, that He might be made the Christ;[1] and next under it

[1] Acts ii. 36.

come all the creatures. Thus is the whole bound together. This is the bond of the divine purpose. This is the grand unity and perfection of all being.

And it is for the sake of this, and that this may be attained, that there is a revealed divine law, that men are not left at liberty, but arranged, set in their several places, and have their several ranges and duties prescribed to them.

It is for the same reason that men are not facsimiles of one another, but have each his own natural mould of character, his own natural reach of understanding, and amount of ability. There are the vessels of small quantity, and the vessels of large quantity. There are the vessels of cups, and the vessels of flagons. It is for the same reason that no two nations or tribes of men are facsimiles of one another, but have each their own capacities, and their own tendencies. Just as in nature, all birds of song do not chant the same melody, all sweet flowers do not exhale the same odour, yet how perfect to the healthful senses of a man is the impression of the external world: so among the members of the human family are diversities of natural operation and of capability, and yet in the body of Christ shall come forth the perfect result, and through the body of Christ shall come forth in all the creation the perfect result, even the "good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Now, I say this is the thing which the apostle is aiming at in the remaining part of this chapter.

He invites men who believe in the mercies of God, and who know themselves to be reconciled to God, and adopted by Him and made members of His Son—He invites them by the renewing of their minds to know, to discern, to approve, delight in, and give themselves up to this will of God. And to them—by the grace peculiar to him as an apostle and master-builder—he gives commandment, that none should think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but should think in and unto sound-mindedness, according as God had dealt to every man the measure of faith. You are dependent upon one another, he says—you are necessary to one another—you cannot do without one another. Each of you has his own grace from God. Even as I have the grace of apostleship, and am made a master-builder, so each of you has his own grace, and is made for his own office. Each is limited—the fulness is in no one. The Holy Ghost divideth out of the fulness that dwelleth in Jesus Christ, "unto every man severally as He willeth;" yet according to the position which each holds in the body of Christ, as is indicated by the verses immediately following our text, verses 4 and 5, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." The fulness is in no one. Ye are members one of another. Ye are necessary one to another. True humility is the acknowledgment of this fact. True sound-minded humility is

submission to this fact. That is what St. Paul would call humility.

And what do men call humility. It is when a man says,—I am afraid to call myself a Son of God. I dare not call myself a saint. I shrink from affirming that I am in the body. I hope to be. I presume not to think that I am in a position to be used of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know not that I have received the Holy Ghost. Now this is not humility, but infidelity—flat unbelief —pride—refusal of God's mercies and of God's gifts. In a Christian man, it is not the opposite of presumption, but the opposite of faith, a fearful symptom of spiritual disease. Nay, it is wicked rebellion. And the secret is, the secret reality is, that such a one is unable to say, "I am a child of God, and a member of the body of Christ," because he is unwilling to be committed to serve God entirely and absolutely. He is afraid to undertake the responsibilities which a knowledge of his position would infer. He doubts God's mercy, because he chooses to doubt it; and he chooses to doubt it, because he loves something else more than God. He is a sinner, and he is too proud to get rid of his sin by confessing it, and receiving forgiveness for it. He is a hypocrite, and he calls it humility.

And let me remind you—why are you saved? Not merely that you may be safe. You are saved that you may serve God, and be His instruments. You are delivered from the fallen man, that you may be members of the risen One. You are

cleansed by the blood of Christ, that the spirit of Christ may dwell in you. Men go about heavy laden, seeking and hoping for salvation, who ought to go about free, and risen from the dead, and seated with Jesus in the heavenlies—standing as God's children on God's earth—waiting for the day when God's king shall claim it. Men go about heavily, wearily, uncertainly, disconsolately, all but hopelessly, unconscious all the while that their greatest sin is robbing God—robbing Him of His praise—robbing Him of their service—robbing Him, keeping back from Him the instruments He wants for the work He has now in hand —which work is the shedding of His light through all the dark corners of human life, and the making ready of all things for the manifestation of the sons of God.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON IV.

WHO ARE OUR BRETHREN?

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal..... For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.—1 Cor. xii. 4-7, 12-27.

Our blessed Lord after being baptized of John in Jordan, entered upon His public ministry. And first, He called to His hand certain men whom

God had made willing to cleave to Him, who became His companions, and went about with Him wherever He went. Among those persons there necessarily arose a certain community or brotherhood. They had feelings towards one another which they felt toward no other persons; and duties to one another which none could claim from them except the members of that community. They were bound thus to one another for no reason, save that of the common call to be the companions of Jesus, which they had all received. On the ground of that common call they follow Him together—they call one another brethren—they love as brethren—they are taught to wash one another's feet.

Our Lord preached and taught. Some who heard, sought for that baptism which He invited them to receive. The disciples—that community of His companions—were charged with the duty of baptizing; and they baptized them. Those who were thus baptized, formed, along with the former, not a new, but a wider community. Towards them were extended the love and the mutual duties that had formerly been confined to that original company. The call of Jesus defined the first community, and imposed the duties peculiar to those who belonged to it. Baptism was the act which defined the wider community; and which stamped upon its members the right of expecting, and the duty of rendering, the offices of that brotherhood. And as the continuance of that brotherhood, and of its feelings and offices, was

risked by the evil passions and the wickednesses of human flesh, it was secured by the duty, already mentioned, of caring for one another; by the precept of forgiving one another until seventy times seven; and by that other, of counting no man a heathen or a publican, until he had refused to hear the church.

When the Shepherd was smitten, the sheep were scattered. By the testimony of certain chosen witnesses of His resurrection they were gathered back, and they continued together, knowing one another as they had known one another before, as men who amid all diversities of character and of disposition had this in common, that they had been baptized and made disciples. By the testimony of those same witnesses many were added to their number; all such as gladly received the word being baptized, and so admitted to the community, known to all the community through means of baptism, as having a right to the brotherly love and offices of all its members, and as being bound on their part to contribute the like brotherly love, and such special offices as might fall to the share of each. There had, indeed, by this time, a new character been imparted to that community. It had received a spiritual being and organization by the gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and the offices of its members were no longer those of a natural relationship; they had become supernatural, even the circulation of the spiritual life which was in Christ the Head, unto all the members, and by all the members. From

that day, the community became, properly speaking, "the Church," "the body of Christ;" the fulness by means of which He shall fill all things.

The next extension of that community was somewhat difficult. Peter is invited by a Gentile to go and tell him words by which he and all his house should be saved. He is encouraged by a vision. While yet he is but beginning to speak, the Holy Ghost falls upon all them which heard. He argues, can I refuse to baptize them? He commands them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord, and so he adds them also to the company of the faithful, introduces them to the love and spiritual duties of the church. The church questions his deed. And they are satisfied that his deed was warranted, only when he relates all the circumstances, and shews that to have acted otherwise would have been to withstand God. They then hold their peace, and glorify God, who by baptism has admitted the Gentiles to the grace of remission of sins and eternal life, and they acknowledge them as members of the one community.

Thus far the body grows in unity; all its members truly embraced by one another, and receiving through one another, according to the spiritual gift of each, the life of their common Head. And none who had once been baptized were excluded from its care and acknowledgment, from its faith and service as spiritual receivers and communicators of divine grace, except those on whom some act of authority, some decision of a

competent judge had passed: as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, of Simon the magician, of Hymenæus and Philetus, and the like. But the church, growing in numbers, spreading over wide distances, embracing peoples, and nations, and tongues; neglecting, forgetting her first guides, the apostles; at last losing them altogether; departs from that simplicity, by which she had at first been able to hold all her members with equal affection to her bosom. Distance, diversity of character, condition and temptations; diversities of mental habits; the various leaven of old religions and philosophies; unkindnesses, offences, ambitions, interferences, immoralities, heresies, weaken the cohesion of its several parts. Into the midst of these came zeal and the want of charity, and they have worked on until this our day, in which no man knows who is his brother, and scarcely any one does, for any higher sake than his own, ask his heart the question, whom shall I so regard? between whom and myself does there subsist this tie of spiritual union, and these mutual duties of spiritual fellowship?

A certain lawyer asked our Lord what he should do to inherit eternal life. Our Lord said unto him, what is written in the law? how readest thou? The lawyer repeated the usual summary of the law, concluding with the words—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Our Lord replied, thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But then followed the important practical question: "And who is my neighbour?"

When the Church came into existence as an election from the midst of mankind, certain duties sprang up between its members, additional to the natural duties of which the law had taken cognisance. These duties are insisted on by our blessed Lord Himself, inculcated in all the epistles, and by St. John made the test of the reality of a man's abiding in God. They are the duties of love in the spirit, and of exercising all the powers and virtues of the new life for the edification of all the members of the common body. They are enjoined in such terms as the following: "Let brotherly love continue." "Love the brotherhood." "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves." "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." "All of you be subject one to another." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to edification." "The God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God." "Receive ye one another to the glory of God." "Do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith." "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves." "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as

brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." "This is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you." "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." "Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us." These are commandments concerning our conduct, not to the world, but to the members of the Church of Christ. This is God's will within His Church, that body whose members we are. The obedience of this commandment is the proof of our being children of God. Those who do not keep it are thereby discovered to be of Satan.

It is manifest from these exhortations and commandments, that the life of a Christian man is not an independent course of private personal goodness, either in the sense of piety and worship, or in the sense of keeping God's law; but it is a spiritual, supernatural participation of the life of the man Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God; whose life we participate in, in the communion of the saints; whose life we do, in the communion of the saints, cause and enable others to participate in. Our Christian responsibility is to yield ourselves up to the one Spirit, for the edification of the one body, the community of God's children, and the temple or dwelling-place of God. And this not for our own benefit, present or eternal, but for the benefit of the whole

community; and not merely for the benefit of the whole community as being itself an end within itself, but for the sake of that glory to God, which the prosperous community shall yield during all the now current period of its growth, and of that still greater glory which it shall yield, when it is perfected in the day of the Lord's appearing.

The lawyer asked, who is my neighbour? May not we well ask, who is our brother? and if we cannot answer it, in what condition are we, or how can we proceed to do God's commandments? It is a momentous question. For each of us is entrusted by God with a measure of the grace of God, which grace we are responsible for the full and faithful use of, and for its use upon its proper objects. "To every one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal," that is, to profit not himself alone, but his brethren and the whole body of Christ. We need to know who are the objects upon whom we are to exercise that grace. We have no right to throw away our spiritual sympathies, and if we fail to exercise them where they ought to be exercised, we are sinners, sinners against the very being of the Church of Christ, nay, we are manifested to be ourselves without the love of God. A father will not suffer any of his children to bring in a stranger to partake of the provision and blessing of his house. The children's bread must not be cast to the dogs. But if one of the family thrust out a brother, he is guilty of one of the blackest crimes. So God, although He would have all men to come to the

knowledge of the truth and be saved, yet He is the author of order, and will not suffer the benefits and spiritual grace of the Church to be bestowed upon one who is not a member of it. And in like manner He will not suffer to fall to the ground our Lord's words, which He spake concerning him who should cause a brother to fall, that it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

I repeat it once more, that the question, who is my brother? who is my fellow-member of the body of Christ? is a grave, practical question; it is not a curious or theoretic question, but one which affects the first, highest, most sacred, most essential duties of a Christian man. Every one allows the existence of the obligation: that there does exist a relationship and mutual duty between one member of the body of Christ and another member of it, which does not exist between any member of it, and a man who is not a member of it. That there is a spiritual relationship—a spiritual love and service, the observance of which is essential to the well-being of the whole, and of every individual member: and that, to such a degree, that no one is unprofitable to any other, that no one is independent of any other, that none can say of any, I have no need of you. You affirm your belief in this every time you repeat the Creed, and say, "I believe in the communion of saints." In saying so, you mean, that such

is the nature and efficacy of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church of Christ, that men are profitable to one another, though locally far removed from one another. Just as all hold the Head, and, though He is in the heavens and they on the earth, are truly, really, and efficaciously joined unto Him by the Holy Ghost; so the members of the body are by the same Holy Ghost as truly, really, and efficaciously knit to one another. We are, therefore, instructed not only "to grow up into Him in all things which is the Head"—but are taught also that from Him, "the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which *every* joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." We therefore perceive, that the fulfilment of this duty is essential to the spiritual well-being of every one of us, to the spiritual well-being of the Church, and to the attainment, through the Church, of all the issues of God's counsels and actings towards men from the beginning of the world.

This being a duty which lies upon our consciences with so much weight, the discharge of which is so necessary, and necessary for such momentous objects, how shall we find the means of discharging it? It is not now—"who is my neighbour?" but "who is my brother?" It is not, to whom am I bound to shew natural kindness, and to render the offices of helpfulness and

humanity? but, to whom am I bound to cling in the unity of the Holy Ghost? Towards whom am I bound to yield myself to the Holy Ghost, as a vessel of divine communication—as a channel for the circulation of the divine, eternal life? Who are those to whom I am bound to look, and who are bound to look to me, for the living effectual interchanges of spiritual grace?

Perhaps our enquirer finds himself, by inheritance, or by some previous act of his own, member of a very narrow and exclusive Christian body. If not, of course he pertains at least to one or other of the larger so-called Christian denominations. Well then, what are the limits of the Church of Christ? Are the limits of your exclusive sect the limits of the Church of Christ? And when St. Paul wrote—"As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another:"—can you as an honest man say that he meant thereby those individuals who belong to your sect? Is your conscience content with such a limitation, and will you cheerfully say, that you are shewing that the love of God dwells in you, by regarding those persons exclusively as the objects of your duty, as members of the body of Christ? Or will you say it of a larger Christian denomination? Is the Presbyterian Church the body of Christ? Or is the Episcopalian? Or is the Protestant, to the exclusion of the Popish? Or is the Popish, to the exclusion of the Greek? Nobody will

positively affirm any of these propositions. And shall conscience be satisfied with anything short of a positive affirmation?

And how then do they settle it? In some very loose way. Oh! it is all *good* people in each of them. And who is to judge who are the good people? Shall *you* judge? No, for St. Paul says, "who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." Yea, God is able to hold him up, and he shall stand. Aye, the very man whom you would judge to be not a member of Christ's body—the very man concerning whom you in your judgment are ready to say, he and I are not members one of another; I owe him no brotherly love; I can expect from him no contribution of the grace of Christ—God is able to hold him up, and does hold him up. And you shall be made to learn, and to confess, that if you had withdrawn your brotherly love from him, you would have evidenced that not he, but you, were in hazard of eternal separation from God.

Nay more—when you look at the men who are called Christians, and see how evil has come in upon them, and how sin carries them captive, what are you to conclude? Is it that these victims of evil and wickedness are thereby shown forth as outcasts from the vine? Or is it not rather more probably shown that, you and others having failed of your spiritual love and duties as members towards your fellow-members in the body of Christ, these weaker members have been

mpoverished, have been defrauded of that strength
of divine life of which you should have been the
suppliers? It turns out, then, that you also, not
hey alone, are the condemned ones. They have
unk back into the wickedness of the flesh, because
ou have failed of the offices of the Spirit. Sin
loes not prove of any man that he is not a
nember of the body of Christ. Still less does it
prove that he never was so. Christ's love is not
o weak and so short-lived as yours. Christ is
not so impatient of provocation, and so hasty to
udge, as you are. Nay, if you say of yourself
hat you have no sin; if you affirm concerning
ourself, that a hasty and uncharitable man cannot
ind occasion to say of you, "that man is not a
nember of Christ;" you deceive yourself, and the
ruth is not in you. Yet your sins do not make
Christ cast *you* off. And why should you judge
f your brother, that *he* is cast off? "Many
vaters cannot quench love," that is the reason
vhy you are not cast off. The same is the reason
vhy you dare not say that he is. Israel is called
harlot in Scripture. No terms are adequate to
epict her estrangement from God, and her
ebasement. And yet, what does God say? "I
vill allure her, and bring her into the wilderness,
nd speak comfortably to her; and it shall be at
hat day, thou shalt call me Ishi—my husband—
nd I will betroth thee unto me for ever." See,
herefore, that ye be in God's counsel, in your
udgments, and in your exclusions. Only have in
hind this, that whoever is not cut off from the

body of Christ, is necessary to you, and you are necessary to him. Your Christian obligations embrace every such person, your Christian necessities require you to lean upon every such person.

Well, then, since it grows upon us as really a matter of practical importance to know who is our brother—since, without having determined that question, we are unable to discharge great Christian duties and obligations; is there any other way in which you will determine it?

Perhaps you will say every member of a true church is my brother; and all those bodies are true churches, in which the truth is held in its purity, and the sacraments are rightly administered. And is it then obligatory upon every private Christian, to know and determine, whether in the various bodies in which Christians present themselves to his spiritual sympathies, the truth be held or not, and the sacraments be or be not rightly administered? Is this not too heavy a burden to lay upon the conscience of private Christians? Are they in a condition to meet it? Have they a right—have they a competency to judge in such a matter? Have not great synods, and œcumenical councils, occasionally found this rather too difficult even for them?

But supposing it possible. Let it be found, satisfactorily, competently found, of any body of Christians, that they hold not the pure truth, or that they abuse the holy sacraments. What then? Are these bodies, and all their members, for that reason, and by that very fact, excluded from the

benefit of Christian brotherhood? The churches of Galatia had fallen into fundamental doctrinal error. Were their fellow Christians, then, absolved from the duty of spiritual fellowship with them? Why, St. Paul's epistle was an act of Christian fellowship. He, according to the measure of his grace, had that spiritual fellowship with them; and every Christian, according to the measure of his grace, was bound to have Christian fellowship with them too. The church at Corinth was so corrupt that they not only allowed monstrous wickedness to pass unreproved, but were even puffed up, when they ought to have mourned. Were they, therefore, excluded from the benefit of Christian fellowship? Nay, St. Paul reasons with the worst of them thus: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" thus confessing for brethren even those whom he most severely reproves. The same church was guilty of despising and grossly abusing the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and that so vitally and to such a degree, that the divine judgments had broken forth upon them; many were sick, and many dead. Was it, therefore, not a true church, or rather, was it excluded from the communion of saints?

Where, then, shall you fix your line? It must be one which will serve not *you* only, but every one; not your present circumstances and position, but all other circumstances in which you can possibly be placed. It must be a sufficient guide for you, not only in Great Britain, but in every

kingdom and corner of Christendom. I go to Greece. I there see a man in gorgeous apparel, waving a censer, and raising clouds of incense before a picture of the Saviour; kissing the picture, falling down prostrate before it. Am I entitled to turn aside and say, "This church and its members do not belong to those of whom Paul says, we are members one of another?" I go to Rome. I see a man in sacerdotal vestments hold up a consecrated wafer, before which the whole multitudes assembled bow the knee, fall down and worship, nay, hide their faces, as before the sensible manifested presence of God Almighty. Am I entitled, even there, to say, these are not members of the body of Christ, they are not objects towards whom I am responsible for the discharge of those Christian duties of brotherhood and spiritual love? And should a man of Greece or Rome be brought, in the course of that earthly lot which his heavenly Father has disposed for him, to become a dweller in this zealous, and devoted, and self-denying corner of Christendom; and seek there for a means of abiding in the living communion of Christ's body: when he came into our assemblies, and found us, when gathered together for the worship of God, neither rising up to praise Him, nor bowing down and kneeling before the Lord our Maker, nor offering prayer to Him, except with such materials as the character and gift and changeful mood of each individual pastor shall make attainable, nor remembering the death of our Lord oftener, perhaps, than once in a whole

twelve-month—would not he greatly misjudge, if he should say, "I must uphold my part in the communion of saints by some means other than that of acknowledging these Presbyterians for my brethren, or communicating with them in the dutiful interchanges of divine life"? We have already shewn that you are incompetent to distinguish among the individuals, and even if competent, you have not the means of distinguishing among them. It is, therefore, vain for you to say, those of them are my brethren who sigh and cry for these abominations, the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. You must either refuse your Christian love to the whole body, or you must admit that it is obligatory upon you towards the whole body; and that, too, in its individuals, in all its members, for you cannot love and spiritually serve an abstraction.

And have you considered what is contained in your decision concerning any man or any body, that you will refuse to call yourself their brother? Do you not thereby judge them unworthy of eternal life? You consign them to the second death, to the blackness of darkness for ever. If there be any meaning in what you do, any force in it at all, that is the meaning and the force of it. Our Lord said, "If he refuse to hear the church, let him be to you as an heathen man, and a publican." You do not know whether the man will hear the church. You know of no way by which the church can be made to speak to him.

You perhaps know he cannot hear that body which you call the Church, for he has no connection with it, and never had; nay, perhaps, does not know of its very existence. Yet you hold him for a heathen man and a publican. You cut him off from your own spiritual sympathies, and of course you cut him off from the sympathies of all Christian men. If St. Paul were on earth he could not bestow his Christian love upon any man whom you have *justly* excluded from yours. If you cannot call a man brother in Jesus Christ, no man can so call him, no man can so treat him. The grounds that are justly sufficient for you, are justly, universally sufficient. The whole Church must act as you are doing, if you do it rightly. The whole supplies of spiritual life, that which every joint supplieth, must be cut off from that man, from whom you lawfully withhold the name of brother. He who is cast out from your bosom—justly—must be cast out from the bosom of the Church itself. Men need, therefore, to consider the fearful amount of meaning that there is in refusing to any the name of brother, and in determining for themselves what are the limits of the Church of Christ.

And yet we have seen that we need to know what are the limits of it, just as the lawyer needed to know who was his neighbour.

If then the Church is not satisfactorily defined by *your* sect, nor by *your* widest name among existing Christian denominations; if the object of your prescribed love is not determined by

character of individuals, nor by doctrines or practices of so called churches; if you cannot define it for *yourself*, because you are unable to define it for *all;* if you cannot *venture* to define it on account of the serious meaning and force of that definition, as regards those who are thereby excluded; how is it to be defined?

We have seen how it was defined at first. All who were baptized, were by their baptism admitted to the brotherhood, and were regarded in love, as members of the body of Christ. They were baptized into the name of Jesus, and so became members of the body of Christ, and members one of another. They were introduced to the mutual relationship of that body, with all its advantages, duties, and obligations. There was no waiting for the fruits of baptism. These fruits were expected from the faith of the individual, sustained, helped, cherished, cultivated, and made fruitful by the love and fellowship of the whole body. Did any member suffer, all the members suffered with him, and so his suffering did bring the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Did any member rejoice, all the members rejoiced with him, and so his joy was kept a holy joy, instead of becoming a snare. Did any one fall, they that were spiritual restored him in the spirit of meekness, and so he was saved from being swallowed up of overmuch sorrow. Was any one rebellious, or proud in his sin, he was rebuked by the competent ruler; men were forbidden to company with him, not permitted so much as to eat with him: yet he was not cut off

from the brotherhood, but rather the more cast upon their sympathies, that, through the divine grace, of which they all in their several places and proportions were able in Christian love to minister to him their measure, he might if possible be recovered, converted, and saved. Even in the case of those whose wickedness demanded the severest judgment of which we read, the end was their salvation, not their destruction. They were not cast away. They were not got rid of. They were put without, and left to God's judgment. They were delivered unto Satan; but with the charity which hopeth all things, it was that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Much more, then, until they were so put out, they were recognised as truly within. Nothing but the competent authority could put them out, and until that authority had uttered its voice, no private person could entertain the question, whether he was to withdraw his brotherly affection, or refuse to such a one the name and the privilege of brother. That, I say, which defined the limits of the church at first, was baptism. That which determined of any baptized man that he had ceased to be a member of the church, was a solemn ecclesiastical act by a competent authority.

And is there any reason why it should be otherwise determined now? Has baptism changed its nature or its efficacy? Let it be remarked that baptism is an act of God. It is an act of God by the hand of man, but it is an act of God. Every baptized man has undergone an act of God. As

his being and birth is of God, and he has thereby entered upon a relation to mankind, so that whosoever he meets is his neighbour, so his baptism is of God, and he has thereby entered upon a relation to Christ, and to the body of Christ, so that all the members of that body are his brethren. His baptism has linked him to the new creature, brought him to the participation of the life of the new creature, has made him the object of the spiritual grace of every member thereof, and, in his measure, himself a channel of spiritual grace to every member thereof. To his growth as a spiritual man is necessary, not only his own steadfast faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and adherence to Him, but the exercise of all the grace that is in the body, and, along with that, his own faithful adherence unto the body. If a baptized man come short and fail, if he show no signs of divine life, but rather prove himself sensual and far from God, he does so for one or other, or both, of two reasons. First, that he has not regarded himself as a member of Christ and of His body. Secondly, that he has not been regarded by his fellows as a member of the body of Christ. The reason why your baptized children grow up and shew themselves far from God is the unfaithfulness of the Church to do her part of love towards them. It is because they have been reckoned for nobody, regarded as not yet members of the living thing, and themselves educated to an attitude of indifference and neutrality, with their own position still to make and to choose for themselves. Whereas

the first religious lesson for a Christian child is to know God's act that has passed upon him, and to consider himself one of God's family, embraced in the living unity of the new creature.

And if he is so to consider himself, is he not so to consider all those on whom the same act of God has been done? Shall he define the Church in one way, when the enquiry is concerning himself, and define it in such a manner as to include himself; and yet, when the enquiry is concerning others, shall he define it in some other way, so as to be continually uncertain whom he shall include besides himself? Certainly not.

But some one may say,—There are many of the baptized who are unworthy of remaining in the body of Christ. Granted. There are many who, through the want of love in the rest of the body, have to all appearance fallen away. Many who, through want of the care of each member in its place, of parents in theirs, of pastors in theirs, and so of all the rest, have never evinced anything of the life of God. Others who, through want of compassion, by which some might have been saved, or of fear, by which some others might have been plucked out of the fire, have gradually, after good promise, decayed and fallen away, and not been recovered. Others who, through the failure of their brethren to bear their burdens, to forgive their faults, to restore them in the spirit of meekness, have been oppressed by despair, and surrendered themselves to unbelief. There are even some that exceed the vileness and ungodliness

of the heathen. Well then, says our interrogator, am I to regard all these as members of the body of Christ and objects of the love of the brethren?

You are very zealous for discipline and for the exclusion of certain persons from the Church of Christ. Well then, why do you wish to exclude them? What is the precise object which you have in view in desiring their exclusion? Is it that your sect may be pure, and that you may belong to a spotless Christian body? If so, then I need not address any further words to you upon the subject, because your object is a visible, worldly respectability, like any other worldly respectability. And these respectabilities attain not to the dignity of Christian objects or themes. They are altogether beneath the scope of the pulpit. The making of them so much of an object is a probable token of spiritual pride, which is a much more hateful wickedness than the outward evils which you are so zealous to chastise. Your zeal for these respectabilities serves only to hide from you the real Christian question, and to prevent you from being willing to learn what are the limits of the body of Christ.

But perhaps you say, our object is larger. Our conscience is troubled with the question, "who is my brother?" We are afraid to exclude any one whom God does not exclude. To such an enquirer we would speak thus. Certainly there are among those who are called by Christ's holy name, some who ought to be removed from His body. But how shall their exclusion be effected?

For have we not seen that an exclusion, which is not separation from the *whole* body, is not separation from the body at all. If he of Corinth, being there put away from among them, can be embraced at Ephesus, it is plain that he has not been put away at all. The man who, for his wickedness, has been extruded at Rome, if he can be received forthwith at Canterbury, has manifestly not been separated from the body of Christ. That of which Scripture speaks has not been done to him. Something else may have been done, but not that thing of which we speak. The man who, for wickedness, has been extruded from one denomination of Christians, if he can straightway find admittance by another denomination of Christians, has manifestly not been touched in his relation to the body of Christ. There must first be found a competence of universally acknowledged authority, capable of pronouncing a sentence that shall be universally binding. In the present state of the Church there is no such authority. Until the third century there was an acknowledged absolute jurisdiction in each diocese. Those who were cut off at Alexandria, were cut off at Rome and at Constantinople also. But this no longer exists. Separation is separation from a humanly defined body. And it is reckoned pretty much a matter of indifference, both by the subject of it, and by the ministrators of it.

But the question is, how shall *that* judgment be arrived at, which the whole Church shall accept as the judgment of God. For it was God, and not

man—it was God, though by the hands and ministry of a man, that made any one a member of the body of Christ, and he can be separated from it again by nothing short of an act which also the Church shall have faith to recognise as an act of God. How is this act to be obtained?

What are the conditions which St. Paul requires, 1 Cor. v. 4? He requires the Corinthians, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan.

But where is the competent gathering together which all will acknowledge? Where is that spirit of the apostle which was essential to the efficacy of that deed? and what evidence is there of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ?

I leave that question with you, and I say that in the present state of the Christian Church you cannot answer it.

But let no one take advantage of what we have said to indulge in sin, because others are bound to exercise charity. You are a child of God. Yes, but that does not mean that you shall certainly, at any rate, inherit the kingdom of heaven. Many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; and the *children of the kingdom* shall be cast out. Let not the Church say, I am the spouse, and therefore I cannot be the adulteress. Why, a woman

cannot be an adulteress, unless she have first been made a spouse. You are the house of God. Yes, and you continue so, if you keep the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end. You are Christ's own. Yes, but they were His own unto whom He came, and they rejected Him, crucified Him. He has done all things for you; you are bought with His precious blood; He has put His holy name upon you; He has bestowed upon you His holy Spirit. Yes, and only so much the greater is your responsibility; so much the greater your hazard; so much the deeper is your fall if you fall from Him. Is there not such a thing as those perishing for whom Christ died? Is there not such a thing as counting the blood wherewith you *have* been sanctified an unholy thing? Is there not such a thing as quenching the Holy Ghost, grieving the Spirit wherewith ye *have* been sealed unto the day of redemption, doing despite to the Spirit of grace? Who perished in the wilderness? Was it not those whom God had saved out of Egypt; whom God had baptized in the Red Sea, and in the cloud; whom God had fed with manna from heaven; to whom God had spoken; among whom God had been present? You perish because of the unfaithfulness of the Church! because these Christians did not love one another! Yes, quite true; but you perish in your own wickedness for all that. It will be the worse for the Church if you perish through her neglect—through the want of faith or through the want of charity. She shall bear

her sin. But you perish nevertheless in your own wickedness.

Therefore, dear brethren, is it not a time for all serious men to look things in the face, and to see how they stand in the body of Christ, and to look at them fairly, free from the narrowness of a so-called church, free from the uncharitableness of a sect, free from the bitterness of a religious clique? And seeing how divisions have broken the Church up, and have impeded, and made impossible, all the original action by which every brother could know who was his brother, and who was not; and how, spiritual fellowship having become unattainable, except on the most miserable and ineffectual scale, the natural fruits have followed of fleshliness, wickedness, and unrebuked apostasy; should we not all repent together? As Daniel did, whose eyes were opened to know what it was for a son of promise to dwell in Babylon, let us all repent, for ourselves, for our people, for our fathers, and for the whole body of Christ. That He may hear us who is in the heavens, and may return with mercies to recover the work of His own hands.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON V.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him."—1 Cor. xii. 18.

The great object and the great blessing of all government is the preservation of order and arrangement. Government does not create any powers. It merely presides among them, recognises them, causes them to be recognised, and takes care that one do not resist another, or overlay it, or take its place, or hinder it, or make it superfluous. Order is the next thing to life in human affairs. Disorder, disarrangement, is the next thing to death. In the character of a man, order in his thoughts is essential to profitable thinking; order in his emotions is essential to good morals; order in his affairs essential to prosperity. In a household every member of it has his own place, and as he keeps it so is he a comfort, help, and joy, or the reverse, to the rest of the family. The servants are not mixed up with

the children. The parents have their secret council, to which the children are not admitted. The tutors and governors are not permitted to look after the duties of the steward or the overseer. Each of the servants has his or her own duty. They do not just run to the work that is nearest their hand. They mind that which is assigned to them. They give themselves to their own duty, and not to that of their fellow-servants. They are dutifully interested that all the work should be done, but they give their mind and their strength to their own part of it. Otherwise the house would have no unity—no joint action to a common end—and would attain no common end, but be a scene of discomfort, uselessness, unhappiness; a nursery of disorderly men, and of unprofitable citizens. Allow me to say, that the want of this order in families is the chief reason why we have so many amiable men who are useless, benevolent men who are disturbers, powerful men who are bad citizens. For if a man have not been first a good son, keeping the fifth commandment, how can he become a good member of society? and if a man have been a violator of domestic order, and an unfaithful fulfiller of the domestic relationships, how can he become a good magistrate or a faithful counsellor.

Need I remind you how essential order is in business and affairs, and in the higher operations of human society. How it is the means of redeeming time, and of concentrating existing energies? It was one of the maxims of Cyrus,

who took the city of Babylon—when a general wishes anything done he should not say, "Let some one go and do this or that," but "Do *thou* this, and let that other be *thy* care," or "I will require that other thing at *thy* hand." Thus shall *all* be performed. Even in every private union and institution among men, one of the first things is to get and appoint governors or directors. Even there, there must be some will, to which each individual will shall be in subjection.

And the duty of government is to preserve order, to see that everyone have his own place, fulfil the duties of his own place, limit himself to his own place, and be free from interference within his own place. In the kingdoms of the world, the ruler is God's minister. God's minister[1] to preserve order, and to keep all men in their several spheres, to save them from being oppressed by one another, to give each all the room that can be allowed him in justice to all the rest. Men do well, when they, under this shelter of government, contentedly occupy the place which is given them, without envy of others, without lusting after that which is *not* given them. They do ill, when, through envy, through lust of power, through covetousness, through discontent and ill regulated activity, through rebelliousness and refusal of those social arrangements under which alone the common welfare can be secured, they thrust themselves into places where they are not lawfully called to act, or lay violent hands upon that which does

[1] Διακονος.

not belong to them. They who do well have praise of the power, says St. Peter, that is to say, ordinarily; for in all human affairs there are exceptions. They who do ill, or who willingly would do ill if they could, they fear the power, hate it, speak evil of dignities, are already in spirit disobedient to it; and sooner or later they shew themselves, bring in wars and fightings; promising liberty—or embracing a promise of liberty, they are themselves the servants of corruption; and, for the most part, visibly to all men, perish in their own deceivings.

The truth is, that human life in this present state is just a history of the energies and activities of man, exercised under a system of checks and limitations. No sooner is a child conscious of will and of impulses from within itself, than it is made conscious of checks and limitations arising from the existence of others besides itself. There is in man a fearful boundlessness of possible action, and there is for each only a very small range of action that is compatible with the present well-being of the individual, and with the safety of present human society. In each single person there is this boundless capability. And what incalculable amount of power lurks in the multitude of human minds and bodies, imagination cannot conceive. Only we know that there is no room for it all in this present state of things. By humility, patience, contentment, submission to God, submission to the existing powers as ordained of God; by believing in the wisdom and goodness

of God, by consenting to the checks and limitations with which men are surrounded; thus only can men live. In any other way, they must either waste themselves in strivings and contentions, or else crush their own consciousness of what God has hidden in them.

Go, any day, and stand in the thoroughfare of some great city—mark and think of the men in those multitudes that throng past you to and fro. There goes by you a man in whom counsel is deep hidden, and the wisdom which is profitable to direct; he could take a wide view of human affairs; it is in him to utter the word that would keep empires at peace: yet his life's occupation is, and will be, to handle a few tools, and to be always fabricating some of the most common and trivial products of human industry. There goes another who could read deep in the book of Nature, find the secret laws of the material universe, and calculate the yet undisclosed motions and attractions of the heavenly bodies: and there he is, all begrimed with the filth of some sordid occupation, at which he has laboured from the dawn of his strength, and will labour till this mortal scene have closed upon his eye for ever. Another—you see in him one that could rule over other men, controlling their angry passions; he would be a mighty captain, and victory would wait upon his steps: but that man sits every day, and all day long, writing dry papers to another man's dictation. There is another—what persuasion, unknown to all, unconsciously to the man, is ready to flow

from that tongue: yet it is silent, and will remain so all the days of his mortal life. Stand there, I say, and observe with a charitable heart, and take in some faint idea of what the world of living mankind is. Truly a gigantic thing, a fearful wonder. And how safely we live in the midst of it. And how lightly and flippantly men speak of it and of its government.

Are these powers, then, given by God for no end? Shall they never be exercised? Shall these mighty energies never burst their narrow bounds, and find room, lawful room, for their widest, fruitfulest application? Oh! what peace for human hearts, what peace of human society lies in the belief of a future state. He who hath brought life and immortality to light by His gospel, what light He hath also shed upon the difficult history of every individual man! He who hath said, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;" He who said[1] that in the ages to come He is to shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus; and who said[2] that unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is to be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God; what a glimpse He hath given us of the abundant room that shall yet be given to all men, and to all human capabilities, within the bounds of creation, within the range

[1] Eph. ii. 7. [2] Eph. iii.

of eternity. Need we wonder that St. John, about to write to the Seven Churches concerning the purpose of God, should break forth into that glorious song, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." That is the enlargement to which we shall attain in the kingdom that shall be revealed. Then shall there be room enough for all; and each one shall be lifted up into such a sphere as shall occupy his whole being, and call forth all that he is, and content his ambition to the full. Yet even this shall be by means of order and distribution; how much more then must the present peace and welfare of all men depend upon an authoritative distribution, and upon men's obedient and submissive contentment with that which is assigned to them.

The question which I have now to urge upon your attention is this—How shall a man know what is his own place in the body of Christ, and what is his brother's place in the same, so that he may occupy and fill the one, and so that he may not intrude upon the other? As it is the office of him who rules in the Church to see that every one fills his own, and trenches not upon his neighbour's place in the body of Christ, so it is the duty of every individual to stir up his gift to the full of that scope which has been assigned to him; with patience and contentment to control all

energies of which he is conscious, and for which no room has yet been found; and with faith, hope, and charity, to see his brother's place and duties occupied by him, or perhaps unoccupied—fulfilled, or it may be neglected; and ever to reckon it for his own best service, his own best, truest help to others, his own surest way of making up to the body for the possible negligence of others, to see that his own place and duty be sedulously attended to.

Now, in a well ordered family, every member of it knows his own place and duty, either through the arrangement that is dictated by nature itself, or through the further arrangement which the head of the family has chosen and appointed. In the state, men's positions and functions are determined in like manner. They are not determined by any consciousness of capacities in the individuals themselves, but by the will of those who have the lawful right of appointing men to their offices, and of placing men in their ranks. Capacity is not the fountain of nobility, for instance, but the will of the monarch is. Neither is capacity the determiner of official dignities. It is not capacity, but election, that makes a man a magistrate or a member of the national council. Among the hundreds who are capable, one only is chosen; he perhaps the least capable of the hundred. To himself, and to every one else, his election is the sufficient ground for recognising his position; to him, the sufficient ground for entering upon his office, and for stirring up the spirit of his

office within him; to others, for rendering to him the honour, or obedience, or other duty which his function demands. And so really is human society a thing ordained of God, and so truly are all men in their social position acknowledged by Him as ministers of His providential care and government of the world, that He is truly and effectually present with every one who is duly and competently called forward and placed by men. To those who trust in Him for grace to fulfil their official duties He is spiritually present, not so visibly perhaps, yet as really, as He was present with Gideon, when called to be judge, or with Saul when chosen to be king, or with Elisha when chosen to be prophet. To all those unto whom, in His providence, power over and among men is committed, whether they be trusting in Him or not, whether they know Him or are ignorant of Him, He is efficaciously present, and will not suffer that which they do to be done in vain. So St. Paul says of the civil magistrate, "he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God." And of the collectors of the tribute the same apostle says, "they are God's ministers[1] attending continually upon this very thing." Thus is God faithful to men—to men in their offices and functions—not unto personal ends, but unto official ends; not in virtue of their personal capacity, or their personal character, but in virtue of their position. And He will not suffer them in their office and position to act in vain, or with impunity to be

[1] Λειτουργοί.

contemned or resisted. For the frame-work of human society is of Him, it is part of the instrumentality of His providence over His creatures. He is jealous over it. The powers that be are ordained of God. The powers *that be* —that do at any time in point of fact exist. Their existence is the warrant of all that hold a position, or that have a power, that their business is to fulfil with that power the duties of that position; and it is the warrant of all that are subject to them, that whosoever resists them shall receive to himself divine punishment. And as of the civil magistrate, so of the private individual. His existing position determines his present duty. His first thought is, not to shift his position—his first *godly* thought is, not to shift his position, but to do his immediate duty there, where he presently finds himself.

If it be thus in the world, and if God be thus jealous for men's offices under Him in the administration of the world's affairs, how much more must it be so in the Church, which is God's house, and in which is the administration of the kingdom of God, in so far as that kingdom has as yet been brought into manifestation. "God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him."

Now let it be remarked, that St. Paul is not here speaking of any purely abstract, or spiritual, invisible arrangement. He is speaking of an actual, visible arrangement, by which men's individual and mutual duties are determined; an

arrangement as visible as that of the relations of social life. Therefore, as men's several positions in the body of Christ are determined by God, there must be some means by which this determination is revealed.

And first a man's position is not made known by his mere gift. A man cannot say, I have the gift to be a teacher, and therefore I am a teacher. The gift may be in him; but *it* does not reveal that God has "set" him for a teacher. Nor is it enough that a few men shall say, such a one has a gift to rule, therefore we shall take him for our ruler. Perhaps he *has* that gift; but his possession of the gift, even though discernible to all men, does not reveal that God has "set" him for a ruler. When there was a murmuring of the Greek widows against the Hebrew widows, the church was called upon to choose seven deacons. The church did choose them, of a class and character which the apostles had indicated, and the apostles laid hands on them, and constituted them to the office. They were no doubt men possessed of a gift of caring for widows, and serving tables. But they were not made deacons by the possession of that gift. There were perhaps, a hundred others possessed of the same. It was the choice of the church, and the apostolic confirmation, that were the means by which God "set" them, and revealed or declared His pleasure.

Again—it is to be remembered that there is a sense in which the natural relations of human life have become spiritual relations in the divine

life. So that parent and child, husband and wife, householder and household, do, within the Church, stand towards one another with spiritual duties and powers, through which God imparts edification and blessing. The Lord Jesus Christ has sanctified these natural relations, and exalted them into spiritual relations. So that the Christian parent knows from the fact of his being a parent, that God has set him so to serve Him for His Church's sake, and that he has the presence and the power of God ever with him, enabling him to fulfil towards his own children spiritual duties, and to minister unto his own children spiritual grace. The Christian child, also, by the mere fact of his being the child of one man, and not of another man, knows that God is present to bless him, and minister spiritual grace to him through this one, and not through that other: knows also that God will judge him if he refuse to accept His blessing through this one, or if, despising his own father, he prefer to try and obtain it through that other. The relationships of natural life, therefore, serve in part to reveal the place in which God hath set men, and the service which He expects of them.

Further, there are the relations in the body of Christ which are merely spiritual, having their origin in the Church, and their only province there. Of this sort are the offices of teacher, prophet, pastor, ruler. God sets every one of them as it pleases Him. How then is that pleasure of His made known? How shall the teacher have it

ascertained to him that he is a teacher set of God? How shall he have his spirit put in a posture for stirring up his gift of teaching? How shall the taught know him, to whose teaching they should give heed and dutifully apply themselves? And in like manner the question might be put concerning all other functions purely ecclesiastical.

Now, there are two positions in which this question may be raised. First, at any given time, by a person living in the midst of actually existing things, and who is desirous of ascertaining his duty towards existing functionaries, towards those whom he finds actually holding certain offices in the Church as it presents itself to him. That is one position in which this question practically meets us. In the other position the question stands in an absolute form. What is the right manner, in the real original will and intention of God, of ascertaining and certifying the places and functions of men in the body of Christ?

The first form of the question must be answered from the analogies furnished in holy Scripture of God's dealings with men, and treatment of their responsibilities. And that which these analogies lead us to is this: that when any man is in fact the present actual occupier of a spiritual office, God's will is that he should consider himself, and be considered by others, *as* effectually for present purposes "set" there, as he would be if he could shew the clearest, most competent and satisfactory evidences of his occupying that position by the

good pleasure of God. The high priest, for instance, among the Jews. No man taketh that honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. There was no doubt as to the way in which that position ought to be attained. Yet God prophesied through Caiaphas, because he was in point of fact high priest, although he came not to that office according to the divine prescription. The ten tribes became a kingdom, not according to the good pleasure of God, but quite in contradiction to the good pleasure of God, for they went away scoffing at God's king, and saying, "Now see to thine own house, David!" Yet God would not allow them afterwards to rebel against their king; nay, He even sent His prophets to call and anoint men to be kings over them. Our Lord directs the Jews to do the bidding of those who sat "in Moses' seat." And, thus God speaks by the prophet:—"When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him: but he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul; but if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among

them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Thus spake the Lord to the prophet Ezekiel.[1] In either case, that of divine appointment, and that of accidental human appointment—in either case, it is the duty of the watchman to watch, and of the people to take warning. God requires it in both cases. So in the Church, if any one ask to whom am I bound to listen, from whom am I to take warning, by whom shall God speak to me; it is impossible to reply to him, except in the analogy of these facts and scriptures. If you are a faithful man, fearing God, and desiring to hear his voice, by your actual pastor God will feed you, by your actual teacher God will teach you; nay does teach you, and hath taught you. Whether your pastor came into that place which he occupies, according to the perfect manner or not; whether he owe his position to the election of the people, or to choice by the ruling clergy, or to any other

[1] Ezek. xxxiii. 2-9.

source, worse or better than these, your practical question must be answered in that practical way. Your duty is to be faithful for your part in that actually existing relation. And if, in the fear of God, you be faithful there—notwithstanding the imperfections and irregularities that attach to its origination—God, who prophesied through a wicked high priest, that He might meet the necessity of *that* occasion, will speak to you by that person to whom He finds you in point of fact united, and, by that means, meet in His faithfulness the necessity of all *your* occasions.

But this duty, and this assurance, let it be observed, do not in the least degree hinder you from going on to the larger, more general question, as to the right and absolutely perfect way by which that pleasure of God shall be known, according to which He setteth the members in His body. It does not hinder you, but rather it qualifies you for that enquiry, and puts you in a posture of calmness and freedom from personal interests and anxieties, that might disturb your thought, or warp your judgment.

The correlative practical enquiry of him who finds himself actually in the position of a pastor, teacher, or spiritual ruler in the house of God, must first be satisfied by similar suggestions. However defective, irregular, or incompetent may have been the manner of his coming into that ministry; he must comfort himself with the assurance that God bears with the things that be—the things that exist—and that the faithful, humble

efforts of such a man to meet the duties of his place, with such gifts and advantages as he finds himself actually possessed of, shall be accepted and countenanced of God, and made the means also of preserving a seed to serve Him through that generation. And when he feels that his present duty is to stand where he finds himself placed, in the faith of God's merciful recognition of men in their actual positions, even where their positions have been attained with deficient or questionable rights; to stand there and do his best to fulfil that office or ministry which has been entrusted to him: he, also, is in the most favourable condition of mind for considering the larger question with calmness and penetration.

As to the second form or aspect of the enquiry; all existing modes of ascertaining spiritual functionaries in the Church of Christ, are, by those who use or who advocate them, assumed truly or falsely, honesty or hypocritically, to be the best attainable means of evidencing the good pleasure of God. Popular election is supposed to be a manifestation of the divine choice—a testimony of the Holy Ghost in the body of a Christian assembly. Appointment by an ecclesiastical court, or by a bishop, overseer, superintendent, consistory, is elsewhere similarly regarded. Also, the Church seems to have been unable to refuse to zealous men, who multiplied churches, or charged themselves with providing for remote rural districts, a certain interference, by way of patronage, in the

appointment of pastors and teachers in such places, and, finding this impossibility, the Church has been fain to content herself by saying: "the providence of God must be supposed in these cases to use these patrons, and by them we must expect the pleasure of God to be made known to us." Always, in form at least, and in abstract principle or theory, the Church has acknowledged God, that He it is who setteth the members in the body. When St. Ambrose became bishop of Milan, he did not become so in the accustomed way. No one was to be had in the regular and accustomed way. No concurrence or agreement could be brought about fixing on any one in the regular way. But an irregular acclamation was made without previous agreement; there was an unanimous calling for Ambrose, a demand for Ambrose, as yet only a catechumen, that he might be made bishop. The church held that unanimous demand —natural or supernatural in its origin—to be the voice of God; and they made him bishop. When the present bishop of Rome was chosen, he was so, apparently, in fulfilment of no previous plan or intention of courts or of clergy, but in consequence of a turning of all men's minds to him, as the fittest man for the time; and his election in such a manner was regarded as attributable to extraordinary divine interference. So that we see that always, either really or hypocritically, purposely or accidentally, intelligently or inferentially, the Church has acknowledged God, as He who setteth men in their places in the body of Christ. This

acknowledgment shews, by its universality, that our text was so interpreted by the church; while the ways in which the principle or theory of the thing was met, shew that the right way had been long lost, and the very memory of it obliterated.

It is quite clear that at the commencement of the church men's places in the body of Christ were not only fixed by the absolute will of God, but were also made known in a supernatural manner. The twelve were called by our Lord Himself. So were the seventy. The successor of Judas Iscariot was first set forward as one of two worthiest of a class that had been indicated and prescribed by a divine oracle through the mouth of Saint Peter, and then he was singled out from the two by God Himself, through means of casting lots. Saint Paul was made an apostle by divine revelation. And when Paul and Barnabas were separated to a particular work, it was done in obedience to a prophetical intimation, which indicated both the will of God that they should be separated to it, and also the persons by whose hands it was to be done.

As to other ministers and the way of their appointment, constitution and mission, we have no express or detailed prescription. Only of one thing we may well assure ourselves, that they were as clearly defined, and as scrupulously set in order, as they had been under the law. And if Moses so arranged the camp, and marshalled the tribes under their standards, and appointed princes and leaders over them, and all this by God's instruc-

tion, and because God is the author of order, and not of confusion; and if he so carefully, by divine revelation, assigned to the Levites their burdens in the service of the tabernacle, and in carrying its holy vessels and its parts; and if David so minutely ordered the courses of the priests, and of the Levites, and of the singers, to subsist through all generations down to the date of Zacharias, and of our blessed Lord Himself; are we, for a moment, to permit ourselves to suppose that the Church was not as orderly and exact in all its arrangement?

Yet we have not now in the New Testament any express, detailed prescription. We must, therefore, be guided by the information which presents itself to us there, as it were incidentally. And it appears that the only way in which we can learn how any were set in offices in the church, is by apprehending how those men were set of whom we have some sort of information. We know of none by name besides Timothy and Titus. St. Paul, oftener than once, makes allusion to the manner in which Timothy had been set in his office, and had been qualified or spiritually endowed for the same. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the *prophecies* which went before on thee, that thou mightest by them war a good warfare."[1] "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the *laying on* of the hands of the presbytery."[2] And again, "Wherefore I put thee

[1] 1 Tim. i. 18. [2] 1 Tim. iv. 14.

in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the *putting on* of my hands."[1] From these passages it is plain that Timothy was to recollect three things, as tokens and assurances to his faith that he was set of God, and that the grace of God was with him for the work to which he was appointed. These tokens were: prophecies going before; the laying on of the hands of the presbytery; and the laying on of the hands of the apostle Paul. It appears that that was the full, regular, sufficient manner of placing any one in that membership in the body of Christ, in which Timothy stood. That was the external form or instrumentality by which God set him in the body, as it pleased Him. It appears that, without these—in the absence of all or any of these—Timothy could not have felt that full confidence and assurance of his calling, and of his gift, in the strength of which St. Paul urges him to war a good warfare.

Again—St. Paul in addressing the elders at Ephesus[2] says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the *Holy Ghost* hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." We cannot but perceive an emphasis in the expression "the Holy Ghost hath made." We must believe that this constitution to their ministry, by the Holy Ghost, must have been sealed and made known to these men, and to those of whom they had the oversight; must have

[1] 2 Tim. i. 6. [2] Acts xx. 28.

been ascertained and made palpable to them by some means; and what means can we in reason suppose, other than the means of which we already know, as having been used in the case of Timothy. We know that God does not do the same thing in many and diverse ways, but He does one and the same thing in one and the same way; and the more momentous and important the thing is, the more certainly does God do it in one way only. Baptism is God's one way of making a man a member of the body of Christ. There is no other way in which a man can become a member of the body of Christ. Prophecy, the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, the laying on of the hands of the apostle, were the means by which Timothy was set as a minister and ruler in the church. Unless God should reveal another way, we are entitled to conclude, that the right, full, and sufficient way of setting any man as a minister in God's house, was by prophecy, imposition of the hands of the presbytery, imposition of the hands of an apostle. We are entitled to suppose that by some such visible, discernible means those Ephesians were set, of whom St. Paul testifies that they had been made overseers by the Holy Ghost. I say, we are entitled to suppose this.

And I further say, that if we are to set ourselves in a position safely to recognise the spiritual overseers of the present day, as set by the Holy Ghost, and if we are not to lay ourselves open to the entrance of all sorts of fanaticism and extravagance, we *must* suppose it. For the Holy Ghost

acteth in the church, for such public purposes, not secretly, or in the unsearchable abysses of men's own minds. There would be no end to confusion, if the Holy Ghost made a man an overseer in the house of God by an inward call, conscious only to the individual. The call must, by some means, be made cognisable to other men, capable of being judged of by rulers, of being ascertained to the man himself, of being testified to the church over which he is about to be set. We find that the actings of the early church, and especially of its rulers, were never determined by mystic and unintelligent suggestions of the Holy Ghost: scarcely even by prophetic intimations, where there was no accompanying reason, or confirmation to the intelligence. When St. Paul, in that same discourse to the elders at Ephesus, tells them that the Holy Ghost witnessed that bonds and afflictions awaited him at Jerusalem; what was the shape of that witness of the Holy Ghost? Was it internal merely, a suggestion, impression, or invincible persuasion of his own mind? Not at all. We know that that testimony was an audible, discernible testimony, spoken through the mouth of persons who had the gift of prophecy, and who were recognised by the church as prophets. When the same apostle, journeying towards Jerusalem, met in every city this testimony, that bonds and afflictions awaited him there, and when certain disciples said to him, through the Spirit, that he should not go up: did he change his purpose? No, he acted upon his own judgment and respon-

sibility. He did not consider these prophecies, in themselves, a sufficient ground of action. And if they were not, for that personal, and, as it seems, comparatively unimportant piece of conduct, how much less could prophecy alone be sufficient for ascertaining to a man himself, or for certifying to the church, a man's call, duty, or public membership in the body of Christ. On a similar principle, no doubt, St. Paul acted in the case of Timothy. And so, Timothy's call, appointment and mission, or in other words, his special place and membership in the body of Christ, was certified to himself by these several things; the prophecies, the imposition of the hands of the elders, and the imposition of the hands of St. Paul. By these means it was certified to those also among whom he stood, and towards whom he ministered. We are therefore entitled to conclude, that, in like manner, by these three things, and not by any one of them alone, or by any two of them alone, were these Ephesian elders placed in their membership in the body of Christ.

Both Timothy and Titus are directed to ordain elders. They were directed to do it by laying on of hands, and that not suddenly, but with the due precautions and preparations—of which, doubtless, one was prophecies foregoing—and with the due accompaniment of imposition of the hands of the presbytery. Timothy and Titus were, for certain limited purposes, temporary *representatives* of St. Paul, in those places where he had left them, and whither he had sent them; doing as much as in

his absence could be done; but waiting for him to return and to set everything in full order. Of course, they most carefully abstained from introducing any new thing; and, in all that they did, followed scrupulously the model which they had seen in St. Paul. And not they only, but all those who by St. Paul, or by any other of the apostles, were similarly employed; they restricted their action in like manner. And thus, in all the primitive churches, the spiritual order of teacher and taught, of ruler and ruled over, all the spiritual relations and memberships, according to the due manner for each, was fixed by God, and had a divine sanction, and was looked upon by every one as a work of the Holy Ghost.

It was in this way that the Church was a building of God. It was builded of lively stones, of stones builded each one in its own place, builded not by being lively, but first lively, and afterwards by a distinct act builded. And that which the lively stones became, when thus orderly brought together and constructed, was an habitation of God through the Spirit. In this way, every individual Christian was *edified*, and as all the stones of an edifice, in their places are, through means of one another, truly connected with all the other stones that go to its construction, even from the foundation and upwards; so that of every stone, how small soever, how concealed soever in the mass it may be, it is still true that the foundation is that which holds it in its place: so, in like manner of the Christian Church it is true, that

every individual Christian is, through means of those who are over him and around him in the church, spiritually connected with all Christian men; and however insignificant his position, however unknown and unobserved by his fellow-men he may be, is truly connected with the foundation, truly sustained in his place by the foundation. We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

We see therefore, what the reality is, of which tradition, custom, and the natural testimony of the Holy Ghost in men's minds, from one generation to another, have handed down to us a shadow. Bishops now address their clergy as persons who have been made shepherds by the Holy Ghost. Presbyteries after their manner do the same. Candidates for the ministry are still supposed to consider themselves moved by the Holy Ghost to desire an office. They are expected to be ready to declare that they so consider themselves. Some form of the question, whether they believe themselves called of God, either is directly put, or to a conscientious candidate is implied. There is still a laying on of hands, and an intention more or less distinct of thereby conferring the Holy Ghost for the work of the ministry.

All these are testimonies to the original apostolical mode of ascertaining and authenticating a man's position as shepherd, ruler, teacher, in God's house.

But they are testimonies only. They are not the things themselves, concerning which they testify.

Those due and perfect means of building the Church of God, are not now employed; are not by any segment of the Church—Greek, Roman, or Protestant—even possessed.

And how hath the Church prospered without them? Exactly as any house must prosper, whose lights are removed, whose rulers are taken from it. Darkness, confusion, uncertainty, have come upon everything. Dispute, ambition, thrusting with side and with shoulder, oppression of the weak, enmities, murmurings, complainings—these things are main features in the history. In the history of the house of God there has been the puffing up of one against another, and for one against another; not edification—not building up,—but, puffing up. There is no competent judge, and therefore quarrels are not healed, and wrongs are not redressed. There is no full testimony to the actings of the Holy Ghost, no means of discerning and ascertaining them, and therefore the presence of the Holy Ghost and His actings are not with full assurance believed in, nor with due worship reverenced. Men do not feel their own places in the body of Christ, nor the places of those over them, or under them, in the Lord, well ascertained. Every one is holding on, as he best can, for himself; with difficulty, with uncertainty—flattering himself, or despising himself—in comfort,

or in despair, as it happens. There is no one to whom he can go for God's counsel. Of man's counsel he gets too much from innumerable volunteers. He changes, and flits about, seeks for he knows not what, and finds it not. The more he is in earnest, only so much the more truly is he unfortunate: ends perhaps, in hopelessness—indifference—even infidelity. Some, indeed, there are, hard spirits, sufficient unto their own selves; proud, leaning upon no one; needing, seeking sympathy from none; born without fear: who are unconscious of these shakings and anxieties, which others are longing to find relief from. There are others entirely absorbed by their own thoughts and activities, their controversies and disputes. There are also many so absolutely fleshly, sensual, and worldly-minded, so sunken down and satisfied in the mire, that they understand not what spiritual sentiments are at all. But such men as are in earnest in their several spheres, under the pressure of their several responsibilities, are in that state of trial, of which I have spoken, more or less, restless and distressed.

And to all such I will tender the two solutions following, premising only this one word, the things that are, are not the things which ought to be.

Therefore, *first*, because neither you, nor any man, nor any assembly of men, can fabricate the things which ought to be, ye must make faithful, patient use of the things that are—"the things that remain;" trusting in the faithful love of your

God, who cannot change, praying to be guided by the guides who are yet left you—such as they are—praying that *they* may be lifted up into true and right guides, after God's own pattern and intention.

And, *secondly*, take encouragement from all the analogy of God's actings: and do not shrink from acknowledging to your own minds, how great is the dilapidation of Christ's Church, and how many are its present deficiencies. Allow yourselves to be spoken to, and venture to open your eyes upon the truth. How severe soever the just rebuke of God may be for the loss of His ministers, instrumentalities, and operations in the Church, yield yourselves to discern the loss, and to hear of it. Seek to attain the right conviction, whatever that conviction may be. And in the measure in which you shall increasingly perceive, how the Spirit has been quenched and resisted, and how the ordinances of God have been slighted, refused, forgotten, or in judgment hid out of sight: accordingly, accept that punishment of an iniquity in which all have shared; be bowed down and humbled, and grieved; and repent for yourselves and for your brethren, and your fathers. For shall not God then return with mercies, as He hath always done to His *repenting* children. For He can heal the sick body, and restore the withered arm; and if Satan have entered anywhere, He can cast him forth.

Pray that the spirit of repentance and of supplications may be poured out upon all the Church. That there may be a great returning of

all, to one another, and to the living God. That faith may be quickened again; that every man may betake himself to God, as a child to a reconciled father; faith to return, faith to ask for entire recovery, not of individuals only, but of all; faith to ask for the restoration of order again, and the setting of every member in the body, as it pleaseth God, that the Church may be indeed as an army with banners.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON VI.

THE DANGER OF DEALING PARTIALLY WITH THE WORD OF GOD.

"Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.—MALACHI ii. 9.

WHEN Jesus—of whom John the Baptist had testified to all the multitude that flocked to his baptism—when Jesus was manifested to Israel, that immediately became plain which had been spoken concerning Him through the mouth of Simeon, that He was set for the fall and rising again of many, and that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed. Involuntarily—unconsciously—by force of mere nature, men thought and reasoned, and spake under the effect of His presence, so as to reveal their condition of mind, their spiritual circumstances. Out of their own mouth came the evidence that justified or condemned them. Some said—"He is a good man," others said, "Nay, but He deceiveth the people."

Some said—"Of a truth this is that prophet that should come into the world." Some—"When Christ cometh will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done." Others said—"We know this man whence he is, but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is. Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." By such expressions, by such ready, superficial reasonings, their hearts spake and disclosed themselves, in the face of that wonder which had come all at once into the midst of them, under the pressure of that presence, which mere flesh and blood felt itself unable to comprehend; that presence which would not leave them, which they could not but think, and reason, and talk of. He came not to judge the world. And yet, wherever He came, men were judged, self-judged, self-revealed, self-detected. He was the true Light, and it could not but be that all things were manifested by the mere fact of His presence. The absence of light, in all its shadows and degrees, the love of darkness, the desire, the need of a covering; they are exposed, evidenced, yet not for men's destruction, but for their salvation; that men may come to know the blessedness of him to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin, and in whose spirit there is and needs to be no guile. Thus He was set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. He came unto His own, and His own were perplexed—moved as the sea. Their hypocrisies were rent asunder, their ignorances discovered,

their pretences of knowledge exposed. Every man spake according to that which was truly in him.

Let us meditate the trials of those times a little more at large: and may God teach us a lesson thereby, and prepare our hearts for standing, or for moving rightly, under a similar trial.

The purposes of God, when revealed to men, are revealed through the imperfect vehicle of human words, and that only in a general form, in their result or issue, without mention in detail of the steps by which the result is to be reached. They are always immeasurably larger than any meaning that can be expressed by words. The words serve the purpose of laying up in the breasts of men a hope which entereth into that within the veil. They are not descriptions by which that which is within the veil may be seen in the distinctness in which God beholds it, but rather announcements of that which is truly yet hidden with God. Time and its events bring out the detail in its successive parts. Those who hope in God, and into whom He puts faith to recognize His operations and His words, they are able to apprehend the unity of divine revelation, and to perceive the one large purpose, as it comes forth, in all its slow, perhaps unencouraging, trying steps of progress.

The Lord God had said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy

head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. This was a revelation of God's purpose. To us who now live, it expresses the whole history of man and of God's past doings on behalf of man, and it expresses besides that which continues to be the object of human hope. It expresses in some sort the life and experience of every individual man. It expresses the division of mankind into the children of the kingdom, and the children of the wicked one—of the Church, into the wheat and the tares. It contains in it the incarnation of the Son of God, His humiliation, His death, His triumph, the yet future manifestation of His victory. To us it expresses all these things. But let us place ourselves in the situation of that man and woman in whose hearing it was first uttered; let us place ourselves in the situation of their children, among whom from generation to generation that word became traditional, how little beyond a very general hope does it contain? When Cain was wroth, and his countenance fell, did that oracle serve to make him understand, how there was then working in him that enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman? Or was it otherwise than by revelation of his heavenly Father, that righteous Abel, first of all men, fell with the cheerfulness of hope under the curse of death, as though his heel only were bruised, and could accept it as a thing wrapped up in that first oracle; just as afterwards it was only by revelation of his heavenly Father that Peter was able to see in Jesus of Nazareth that

seed of the woman, by whom the serpent's head should at last be bruised?

We might shew the same thing in regard to all the divine oracles. They grew in the progress of time with the advance of human history. They grew, as out of a seed; even out of that original declaration, in which we are able to read a prediction of all that has since happened. They grew as out of a seed; until that which had been wrapped up in a single sentence had expanded into many books. But the character of them never changed, and it was as true at the time of our Lord's coming as it had been in the days of Abel, that only by a divine gift of faith could they be interpreted—only by a divine gift of faith could their most explicit fulfilments be discovered.

But as the holy oracles of God grew and expanded themselves, as they assumed more the shape of detail, the temptation came more and more upon men to imagine themselves capable by natural understanding and mere rational exposition of apprehending them and their fulfilments. Under the Mosaic economy, a body of men was separated for handling the word of God; whose lips should keep knowledge, and at whose mouth the people should seek the law. They should have kept knowledge by faith in God, and by depending upon Him for supernatural light, as scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, able to bring forth out of their treasures things new and old. Like the prophets, unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto far off

generations, they did minister the things which they were made to utter—like *them*, they should have searched and should have received according to their smaller measure, where needful, some insight, some revelation, profitable for interpreting to the people of their time the oracles that had been committed to them. But by that temptation, which is common to men, they handled the word of God in a merely professional way, and became such teachers of the law as St. Paul warns Timothy against, who understood neither *what* they said, nor *whereof* they affirmed. By this means, Moses, and the Psalms, and the prophets, acquired a certain technical, traditional, canonical form in the minds of the Jewish people—such form, that is to say, as the carnal wisdom and penetration of the scribes of successive generations had gathered and bound about them. Parts of revelation that were suitable to the feelings of the scribes, or to those of the nation, were called out into disproportionate prominency, and other parts, more obscure, less attractive, difficult to conform to the system, were passed by, suffered to fall into forgetfulness. Yet these latter, often the very words of God, might for the time be the most necessary for the people to know—not more true than those other parts, on which their attention was riveted, but more in place for the time, more requisite for the guidance of the people, at the then instant juncture of their history. The formal and professional scribes and prophets were, to a man, clear that the king of Babylon would

not prevail against Jerusalem, and through them all cruelties and hardships fell upon those who spake the word of the Lord. Yet they might have found it all written in the book of Deuteronomy, had their system not enslaved and blinded them. And when our blessed Lord came, all the professional scribes were clear that He who came in such humility was not the promised Messiah—much more, He who could not save Himself and come down from the cross; although that humility and that submission to a shameful death were indeed plainly written in the holy oracles, of which they had the charge. They were not in error because they expected the Son of David to appear in a far different manner. They saw clearly that He should. They saw as clearly that He should appear in glory, as we see clearly that it behoved Him to appear in humility. But they saw partially. They saw partially, because they looked technically, systematically. They looked not in faith at the living oracles, depending upon Him whose purpose was therein revealed, whose purpose was wider and mightier far even than His own revelation of it, and whose Spirit was still the one expounder of the revelation. But they looked at the traditional form into which human understanding had moulded the truth of God, and in which form the joyful, the triumphant prospects of the children of Abraham had been easily combined into a glorious unity, and held forth to the expectation of the people; while many a word of unpromising tone had dropped

out of notice, unintentionally, because it was obscure, chiefly because they eagerly grasped at the good, and would not set evil before it. They were fools and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets had spoken, and that it behoved the Messiah to suffer these things, and then to enter into His glory.

And the error was natural, most natural, we can easily account for it. And yet how tremendous were its results. Because that nation, under the guidance of their carnally minded, system-loving scribes, *would* look for the Son of David as a glorious, triumphant king, therefore, they *could* not believe when the Son of David came. They rejected Him, they crucified Him, and would not hear of His name even from those who preached Him after a new manner, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. At Jerusalem—at Rome—throughout all the cities of the world, with one consent, with one view, from one cause, they refused Him. Even because they were partial in dividing the word of God—the word of truth. And so, although they were the seed of Abraham, the children of the kingdom, the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with their fathers, the men on whom the blessing should have lighted, from whom and through whom all nations of the earth should have been blessed; yet, they rejected Him—they frustrated the counsel of God—they *would* not enter in. And they were passed by—the purpose of God sped past them. God put His name upon another

body. He made them a people, who had not been a people.

Israel refused to become the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost. They *might*, even after they had crucified the Lord of Glory, they might have become His body, for His prayer for them had not been in vain. "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." It had not been in vain. They might have become His body. "Unto them first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless them;" but they *would* not: and at last God turned to the Gentiles, and *their* house was left unto them desolate — their house — their temple — because they would not become the spiritual house, by receiving remission of sins through the blood of the crucified One, *and* by receiving the Holy Ghost. God forsook their house, because He had procured for Himself another—even the body of His Son, the living temple, the habitation of God through the Spirit.

He *had* been among *them* above all people. Jerusalem had been the divine city—the holy metropolis of the world. But He was now incarnate, and they would not permit *Him* to live whom they had ignorantly been worshipping. They crucified Him, of whom they had been since the days of Egypt the witnesses to all the world. God made His progress, and brought forth His purpose by successive acts, and here was one of them. They saw Him not in that act, they refused Him in that form. And now there follows another

act in that progress. He is not only incarnate, He is present in the Holy Ghost. He is seeking for a body—a Church—to dwell in, and by which to reveal Himself. Again, they see Him not. They see not their God in *that* act either. They refuse to be His dwelling-place. St. Stephen testified, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do ye."

The purpose of God sped past them. And God made suddenly, unexpectedly to all men, a prodigious advance. "Grace and truth came." "The true light shone." The Holy Ghost was given. Some men were born again—born of water and of the Spirit. The new creature had begun to be—incomprehensible to the carnal mind—incomprehensible to the scribe—no part of his system. He was zealous for the *old* thing. Cain was again wroth, and his countenance fell. He did not understand what God spake to him. He did not see it in the original oracle. There seemed to be nothing that he *could* do, but slay his brother. His thoughts were confused. Anger alone took the mastery of his heart. And though they were the children of the kingdom, the people of Israel were cast out, and many came from the east, and from the west, to sit down in the kingdom of heaven instead of them. So the seed of Abraham after the flesh, immediately after they had given forth Him who was the promised seed, refusing to become like Abraham in his faith, refusing to go forward into another country, refusing to follow the promised seed in all that God should lead Him

through, and to share with Him in all that God should make Him partake of; refusing to follow David into the wildernesses, and to hide themselves with Him in the cave, because they hasted to see and to share in His temporal throne; refusing no less to follow Him to the right hand of God, although His exaltation thither was testified by the miracle of Pentecost, and by the words and works of those who on that day had been endowed with power from on high—unable, I say, thus into the depths, and into the heights, to follow this child who had been born unto them; they attained not that which they sought for, and were left far behind.

This befell them, through means of their partial, literal, external handling of the oracles of God. St. Paul testifies, that they *had* a zeal for God, but they could not see God except as He walked in their scheme, and fulfilled His word according to the way in which they divided it. Their prophet must be like to Moses, nay, Moses over again. Their king must be David over again. Otherwise, He is not the one whom they expect, and they receive Him not.

When the angel appeared to the blessed Virgin, he said, "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." When John the Baptist preached, he said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." When our blessed Lord

began His ministry, He said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." When He sent forth His apostles and disciples to preach, He told them to say in like manner, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." He argued from His casting out of the evil spirits, that the kingdom of heaven was come nigh unto those who beheld His acts. Now the word of the angel, and the preaching of our Lord and of His disciples, were understood according to the notions of the hearers—according to the traditional meaning of that word, "The kingdom of heaven." The *word* was *among* them, the expectation of a kingdom was among the people—had been from the days of David—nay, from the times of the patriarchs. The prophecy of Daniel had revived it. They looked for the consolation of Israel—as indeed those of their posterity, who, until this day believe in God, do still look for the consolation of Israel—in the person of a glorious king, of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. Thus, doubtless, were interpreted that word of the angel, and those words of our Lord and His apostles.

But our Lord went on to preach. And His preaching was twofold—it was partly plain, and partly in parables. The part that was plain was intended to shew what holiness and righteousness God required—and if possible thereby to make men repent, and to see the inefficacy of the law,

and *how* the law was to be fulfilled. The part contained in parables was a commentary upon the words, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." The parables contained the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. These it was not given to *all* to understand. The *right* to hear these things *plainly* was not given to all, but to those only who followed Him, and who went with Him wherever He went, and to whom He spake in the ear in closets. "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables."[1] In these parables He hid, He laid up for all generations, a knowledge of what the kingdom of heaven is; of its history; of the long absence of its king; of the unbelief and rebelliousness of its subjects; of its long delay, proving the faith of all men, exhausting the faith of many; of the entering in of Satan, the mingling of his children among the children of God, even the mingling of his spiritual uncleanness with the holy manifestations of the Spirit of God. And these parables He interpreted to His disciples.

But He did so with little or no immediate enlargement, even of their minds. They had heard of the householder, who was to go away and to leave his servants to occupy talents till he came. They had heard of him who was to go away and to receive a kingdom, and to return. Yet they could not imagine any meaning for His words, when He said, "A little while and ye shall not

[1] Mark iv. 11.

see Me." And after His resurrection they had so little insight into the history which, in the parables, He had spoken before for His Church, that they addressed Him with this enquiry: "Wilt thou at *this* time restore the kingdom unto Israel?" So difficult is it for men to accommodate the divine truths and promises to one another; to believe them impartially, to believe them all.

And this is all written, and recorded and handed down to us, that we may be a wiser generation—that we may not be partial in the word of God: but keeping ourselves free to *all* the will of God, may understand His word; may submit His word unto Himself; and be ready to go on with all the progress of His footsteps. *We* shall no doubt be tried as *they* were. They would have cleaved to that unto which they had attained; the culminating point of which had been the throne and kingdom of David. Thus far God advanced, and thus far they had advanced with Him. After the reigns of David and his son, there had come a long pause, a stagnation, as it were. That throne and kingdom had ever since remained the highest point of attainment. And God did not despise the advance which He had then made. God did not deny it, or nullify it. It was one of His great acts, as Ruler in the kingdom of men, and it was an act that would stand, and David should not want a man to rule over Israel. But He had now something more to do. He had another great act to accomplish in man—an act of which David had spoken, to which David had looked

forward, to which David had not attained. And we belong to that act. They would not go on to take part in it. We of the Gentiles were taken, that the act might be done. God would not be hindered by the unwillingness of His people. The Gentiles were taken, the act was done; and the Church—the body of Christ—the new creature, came into being. And there has been a pause, as it were, a standing still, for eighteen hundred years; and the parables have gradually been receiving their fulfilment. But this pause must come to an end. And our temptation shall be like theirs, to cling to that unto which we have attained—to see God in that—and to refuse to see Him in the things which He shall further will to do. The Israelites were offended, because His act *then* was not the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Perhaps Christians would be offended should God now return, and take up that expectation of theirs, and restore the kingdom unto Israel, and fulfil the literal word spoken by the angel to the blessed Virgin.

We are especially well skilled in *those* scriptures which they of that generation could not see into. The spiritual, in contradistinction to the temporal; the invisible, in contradistinction to the visible; faith, in contradistinction to law and ceremony; all that was intolerable to them, is to us precious —almost *alone* precious. But they also believed in the Scriptures. The word of God was precious to them also; though not as a whole. They idolized a part—they were zealous for the word of

God, but ignorantly, for they looked at a part and it was not the *time* for that part. It was the time for another work of God.

And may not we also be partial. The well instructed scribe who knows concerning the kingdom of heaven—he brings forth from his treasure things *new* and old. May not we be partial, and lovers of the old only. If so, the time *must* come when we cannot bear that which God shall next set His hand to.

Are we not wedded to *our* condition? to the condition, I mean, which the preaching of the apostles and the formation of the church introduced us to—the condition of the absence of the bridegroom. The householder is absent. We are used to it. We think not of anything better in the church than the absence of its Head. We do not *need* a comforter. Our Lord thought we needed a comforter; but we do not. Yes, men need a comforter—for worldly sorrows—under earthly bereavements—under their own losses—under the pangs of their own uneasy consciences. But that was not the comfort for which Jesus, on His departure, thought it necessary to provide. *I* go away; but I will send the Comforter. I will pray the Father, and He shall send another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever. The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall the children of the bridechamber mourn. For that reason they shall need a comforter. But if they become familiar with His absence, they shall not need a

comforter. They shall become ignorant how to use the Comforter. His comforts will be of no value to them. They will use the Holy Ghost for the comfort of their private distresses, when they have lost sight of the public distress, the common distress of the whole Church—the absence of the Lord. What use shall there be for the Comforter on the part of those who are symbolized by the five foolish virgins? What on the part of those who say—"My Lord delayeth His coming," and who eat and drink, and beat their fellow servants? What on the part of any to whom the second coming of the Lord is of no interest; nay to whom it is not *the* great engrossing point of interest, to which everything else leads, to which everything else is subordinate and subservient?

Yes, brethren, we have our favourite morsels of divine truth, just as they had. All the different sections of the church have. We *are* partial in the word of God. Still more since the great rent of the sixteenth century, at the time of the Reformation, there has been a taking of the truth of God by fragments. That was a tremendous effort, by which, in the days of the reformers, the foundations of the Christian faith were cleared. An effort which, as it were, sufficed for the mind of man to accomplish, and then to wonder at, to admire, almost for three centuries. Ever since, the thoughts of the church have been occupied with that clearing of the foundations, which was then effected. These foundations—justification by faith alone, the all sufficiency of the atonement, accep-

tance only in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ —have formed the staple of all instruction, exhortation, meditation, ever since. Our fathers cleared the foundations; and we have looked at them, and trod in the mimic steps of their conflict, and fought their battles over again, as though the foundation were everything, and there was no building to proceed with thereupon, no perfection, such as St. Paul told the Hebrews he wished to go on unto. And as those foundations had a strong personal application, and could easily, to every individual, exhaust their interest in their personal application to himself, or to others whom circumstances led him to be anxious or zealous about; so personal safety and peace with God has come to be the main idea, anxiety, and labour of every one. Most people regard doctrines as to the church, its nature, its use in God's intention, and all that class of subjects, rather as *speculative* doctrines. They think that this is knowing something else than Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. The very same they say of the hope of the kingdom of our Lord. Though the gospel began with the preaching of it; though the gospel be called the gospel of the kingdom; though the parables be the mysteries of the kingdom, and every one of them most practical: yet the kingdom is reckoned a speculative subject, something else than Christ crucified. It is not proclaimed—it is not expounded. No—we are busy with mortal men's consciences. We are teaching one another how to die in comfort. If we attain that, we have

a reward of our labours. We are occupied with individuals. We want to keep them well in mind of death, and of the necessity of being prepared for death—with some comfortable evidences of conversion—with some comfortable assurances of having an interest in Christ, and of being at peace with God. That is our labour; and we are well content if God give us *a few* seals of our ministry.

Very good. But is there in all this no partiality in dealing with the truth of God? Are there parts of His truth which are unnecessary, superfluous, unprofitable to men? Is it not possible, that the mind of Christendom received a bias during the struggles of the Reformation time, and has forgotten how to divide rightly, equally, the word of God? And when God's time shall have come for openly revealing His kingdom, about which we have thought so little, and of manifesting the sons of God in their unity as the Church and Body of Christ, may not we be found, like the Jews, unprepared for that step of His—be offended by it—refuse to share in it—and so be passed by, as they were? The Jews said, restore the kingdom to Israel. But God's time had arrived for doing something else. Even the disciples said, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And our Lord's answer was, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." That will happen in its time. At present there is something else in hand. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you,

and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæ, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. The thing that is now in hand is the ministry of the Holy Ghost, and the formation of a body for Me, through whom I shall be eternally manifested. That must first be begun, and carried on, *until* it is finished. Then shall come another time and season, and to it will be assigned its own event; for the work of God is *very* manifold. The Jews said, restore the kingdom to Israel; let the throne of David be re-established, and let the son of David sit thereon, and give to him, as Thou hast promised, the necks of his enemies. But it was not the time for that. No, it was the time in which God should say unto that son of David, who was David's Lord—"Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." That must first be done. The apostles proclaimed that it had been done. It was what they announced to the Jews on the very day of Pentecost itself. It was the first seed of the apostles' gospel[1]—"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David. . . . For being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne: he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being

[1] Acts ii. 29.

by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, the Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.'" This was the first sermon, and it made many cry out—"What shall we do?" And then, repentance and remission of sins being preached, baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost being offered, there was that day added to the Church, not a few seals of their ministry, but three thousand souls. You want the son of David to sit on David's throne. We declare to you that David's son has been born, and you have put Him to death. But God has raised Him from the dead, and has made Him Lord and Christ—David's Lord—and hath said unto Him, "Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." And He—David's son—has on that throne of His triumph been mindful of His people Israel. He hath sent forth the Holy Ghost. Wherefore come, and ye shall receive that which He hath sent forth. For He is to have a body; and when His body, His Church, is completed, He shall come again, and the whole earth and every eye shall behold His glory, and then *every* word shall be accomplished. All this was in that sermon which converted three thousand souls. But the most part of those who heard had no higher hope than the throne of David—no higher object; and because the throne

of David was not restored, they treated the whole as a lie. To *us* it appears marvellously plain; and *we* are in the habit of wondering at the blindness of that generation.

Well then—what are Christians desiring? Many, we have already seen, are thinking of nothing but themselves, and the business of personal religion. Many, are zealous about recovering the Church to her ancient model, getting back to the condition of the best times—the first three centuries, say some—the purity and simplicity of the apostolic age, say others. And what is all that but asking God to restore the throne of David—the glorious and thriving time of the Christian polity—as if anything that God does, were ever a mere recovery and repetition of something which He had done before. Was not the exhortation from the beginning: Forget the things which are behind, and press forward to those which are before? Leaving the *principles* of the oracles of God—the beginnings of truth—let us go on unto perfection? He who runs a race looks *before* him—sets his eye upon the goal. So must the Church look forward. We must neither so affect the truths by which all Christendom was revived at the time of the Reformation, as to occupy ourselves with the gospel of personal salvation, to the neglect of the doctrine of a one Church, and a one communion of saints—nor so idolize the principles and beginnings of Christianity, as to root ourselves there, and stand, when

we ought to be running onward, or ready to run onward with our Lord. There is something before us. We have a calling, and we have not attained it yet. We must *look* onward. "*Looking* for that blessed hope," says the apostle, "and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour." The kingdom of heaven is still only "*at hand.*" He who went to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return, has not yet returned. All generations have waited for Him. This generation waits for Him. All creation waits for Him. When He returns, His kingdom shall come. It is said in Daniel that the saints shall take the kingdom. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."

It is men who sing that song—"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; *and we shall reign on the earth.*" It is men who sing that song: and the song is true. It is sung by those who fall down before the Lamb in heaven, and there can be no untruth sung in that presence. And they say, We shall reign on the earth; this is the burden of their song. And what do we sing of? Should not we sing of the same? When St. Paul declares[1] that he forgets the things which

[1] Phil. iii.

are behind, he says further—"I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And how does he interpret that expression? By saying, "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body; according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." The prize of our high calling is bestowed upon us *then*, when our vile bodies have been fashioned like unto the glorious body of Him who is at the right hand of God. They who are seen, in vision, singing in heaven that they shall reign on earth, shall reign after their vile bodies have been so fashioned. They shall come with the Lord. Them that *sleep* in Jesus shall God bring with Him. He cometh with ten thousand of His saints. And we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall be changed; for we shall not *all sleep*, but we shall all be changed. Then shall the glory of the Lord appear, and all flesh shall see it together. A king shall reign in righteousness then, and princes shall decree justice. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients, gloriously. That is the thing we are to look onward unto. To look at anything else is to come miserably short. In that alone, in the hope of that, shall we find an interpretation for *all* Scripture.

The Jews set their hearts upon the throne of David restored again. And the highest aspiration of these Christian days is the purity of the apostolic times restored again. But their minds were so filled with the idea of that restoration, that they totally missed the mark of the prize of their high calling. The promise was to them and to their children, but they missed it. Let us take heed of sighing so ardently for the apostolic things and times, as to forget our calling, and miss the mark, as they did.

The time of God's saying, "Sit Thou on My right hand," was the time—that circumstance was the occasion—of *their* coming short. They were not prepared for that. They might have been. It was written in the Psalms. But they had meditated partially in the holy Scriptures. They had meditated their own things. They had set their hearts on an event on the earth, when God had to bring to pass an event in heaven. And we are partial. "Let each of us get to heaven. Let us so live as that we may die in the assurance of God's peace and favour. Let us so die, and then we need be anxious about nothing else." That is the body of practical divinity. That is the use made of Jesus Christ We are not meditating even Him whom they meditated and hoped for. We, some of us, have settled it clearly in our minds, that their hope was a pure delusion, never to be fulfilled. We do not consider that Jesus was seated at the right hand of God for a time only; that perhaps He shall fulfil the glory of the

natural, the temporal promises of the Jewish covenant, as well as the glory of the spiritual. And when He comes to consummate both, that all the Scriptures may be fulfilled, shall not we who have meditated only the things that make for our own personal peace—shall not we be overtaken unprepared, surprised, unable to rejoice in it, unable to share in it, unable to go on with our God in the progress of His actings?

Dear brethren, do not think that it is of no consequence whether you do or do not meditate and set your hearts upon these hopes of your calling, and these coming acts of your God; nor weary of our importunity. Do not think it is enough to be personally, individually, *safe*. You shall be saved by hope, and these things of which we speak are the objects of hope. These things are the objects of that hope, along with which the love of God shall be shed abroad in your heart. Take heed that your thought of personal safety be not a piece of pure selfishness. You must be sanctified as well as justified, and by this hope you shall be sanctified. St. John says—"He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." What hope? The hope "that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." The hope of seeing Jesus again.

And do not suppose that you cannot be surprised by that event. That which you have not habitually meditated *must* take you by surprise. If your *will* be not prepared to go *along* with it, it must take you by surprise. God accepts you

not without your will. He carries not away with Him any man who does not joyfully, with his whole heart go along with Him. He does not violate the nature which He has given to man as a responsible moral agent. Those who cannot say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," are not acknowledged in the day of His appearing.

When *He* shall swallow up death in victory, in the day when the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces, who are they that partake of that blessing? Those who can say, "Lo, this is *our* God; we have *waited* for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord: we have *waited* for Him, we will be glad, and rejoice in His salvation." "Unto them that *look* for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

O brethren! it is high time to enlarge yourselves, and get beyond yourselves, and the saving of your *own* souls, and the saving of other men's souls. You are *saved*, not merely that you may be safe, but that you may wait for and welcome Him who is about to come in the glory of His Father and of the holy angels. That you may be *with* Him in the day of His appearing, and that with all the saints you may reign on the earth, in His kingdom. That is the glorious object for which God has saved you. By the attainment of that object His glory shall be made great in your salvation. By anything short of that His glory is but in part revealed; the amount and the

"manner" of His love is obscured. The Son of God hath made you freemen, citizens of the New Jerusalem, heirs of a kingdom which cannot be moved. Yet you do not enlarge yourselves into your new position. You find it too large for you to apprehend. You can understand the old condition of bondage and fear; but this new condition, this nearness to God, as His dear children in Jesus Christ, you understand not, cannot take in the knowledge of, do not live in it, do not take the joy of it, render not unto God, because of it, thanksgiving and acknowledgment. The fear and the bondage cling about you, to the hindering of your worship, to the clouding of your conscience, to the weakening of all your powers; nay to the grieving and resisting of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of the Son, and who cannot dwell with you, if you *will* not say Abba, Father.

See how by your selfish spiritual ways you burden yourselves, and draw a veil over your own eyes! How much of the holy oracles you pass by, are unable to interpret, seek not to interpret! Draw a veil over your own eyes! so that you do not perceive the purposes, do not take notice of the doings of your God. And see, further, how you do burden your pastors and spiritual rulers; and constrain them to abide in the *selfish* region of spiritual things, and to exhaust all their labours on the narrow, the shortcoming business of saving souls! By your selfishness you are made short-sighted. You will have your pastors to shew you nothing but the things that are near, personally

near, immediate, personally appreciable. And why? It is by your unbelief, your partial faith, your inability to look at *all* which your Father hath spoken of and purposed. You doubt of something, and therefore you fall into doubt of all. You are not sure that God *hath* saved you, and called you with an holy calling. You doubt the power of the blood of God's own Son. You cannot trust all to the mere love of God. You have converted Christianity into a philosophy, and you have become entangled in the meshes of the subtle flesh. But the root of it is deeper still. Be assured, of every spiritual difficulty the root is in your conscience. You have been yielding to sin, and then cloaking it. Your tempers, as you call them, your infirmities, the world,—they are yielded to; and you repent not forthwith, you confess not forthwith, you are too proud, you are ashamed to confess your sins, you are angry because of them, angry at God for failing to help you: "ah! He is a hard master;" you are discouraged, disheartened. You rise not up in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ to cast your sins off. You let them remain on your consciences. They accumulate there. Satan lays hold of you through your pride, through the growing, self-multiplying load of your sins. No wonder you cannot see afar off. "He that lacketh these things is blind," says St. Peter. He cannot see *now*—and shall he see, think you? how shall he see more, even when the Sun of righteousness has arisen, and it is broad day?

And by your questioning, querulous, unbelief; and by your keeping an unclean corner of your heart still for the entertainment of sin; and by your pride, that will not at once say, *even to God*, "I have sinned; God be merciful to me a sinner;" by these you not only keep yourselves low and short-sighted, but you keep down all your pastors and spiritual guides. You waste their time with your miserable, personal, selfish, spiritual necessities. Truly, for the time ye should all be teachers, but, instead of that, all the pastors bend under your need that one should teach you again (not once, but over again) the first principles of the oracles of God. *They* have many things to say. Jesus by them has many things to say to you, but He cannot, for ye are dull of hearing; you will not go on, and they cannot go on. Oh! put away—put away hastily your hypocrisies, your double-mindedness, your indulgences of yourselves. Low as they have fallen; far as they now come short of the high and varied functions of spiritual ministry, to which God called them at the beginnings of His Church; deep as is the oblivion in which they and we, and the whole Christian family, have been steeped through the fleshliness and the provocations of centuries, through oblivion of their calling, of their grace and power in the Lord Jesus Christ—the ministers of God they are. In them, God the Holy Ghost waits, waits for you—hinders them, hinders Himself, for your sake—because you are slow of heart to believe all that He hath written, all that He

would fulfil. But shall He always thus wait and make delays for you? At last He spared not the natural branches. Soon, full soon, He will no longer spare you.

But if you will truly fall down before Him, and unreservedly repent, and make a clean and entire confession, shall not the peace of God be given you, and the new heart expand itself within your breast? Your eyes shall be opened, and your ears unstopped; and you will be made to know great things concerning your Lord, and His works and His purposes. Yea, those very pastors who hitherto could only weary you with the thousandth time told tale of repentance and faith—through them shall be poured the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are wrapped up and hidden in the holy oracles; and so rich shall be the river of refreshing which the Holy Ghost shall bring to you from the presence of your God, that the pastors whom you now have, shall not *suffice* for channels—not they *all*—with *every* enlargement that your heart's return to God shall secure for them. All God's gifts shall be needed *then;* because the Comforter shall *then* be appreciated. Those that are found watching for your souls in all your churches, under all your denominations, they shall doubtless be first in honour, and the word of God shall flow largely from their lips; but the visitation of your God shall be so large, the blessing from on high shall be so abundant, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. "Bring me yet another vessel" shall the widow

say, and until all the vessels she has, and all she can borrow, be filled—until her sons say, "there is not a vessel more," the oil shall not be stayed.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON VII.

THE SPIRITUAL IS HID IN THE SENSIBLE.

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."—1 Cor. ii. 7-16.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who spake the parables, is the same who also made the worlds; without whom nothing was made that was made. He made them all, according to the purpose of God, who seeth the end from the beginning. The creation was not a thing complete in itself, nor was it a fragmentary work, insulated from the rest of

the operations of God; but it was a *part* of the large scheme; its end was not in itself; its excellence, fitness, and meaning, were known to *God* alone, who is the Author of all being, and in whom all being is one. It had reference to all the intentions of God, and was so framed as to be a storehouse of indications and figurative intimations of future, higher things. It was a book of knowledge to such as knew to read it aright.

It is written, that God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good. But with what eyes God looked upon them, we can scarcely imagine; or how much He saw in them, or what the full extent of that *goodness* which they had in His sight, we can scarcely in the *remotest* degree conceive. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

We scarcely appreciate the excellence of *human* works. The child does not understand the parent. The simple does not understand the prudent. The peasant does not understand the prince. The governed do not appreciate the acts of the governor. Complicated machinery is a mere mass of confusion to the ignorant, while to the inventor it is full of beauty, harmony, fitness—its operations and results known to him. So, might we add—of statues—paintings—architecture—music—and all other fruits of the operations of the spirit of man; of all these it is true—what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which

is in him? How infinitely more are the things of God knowable to Him alone!

But He who spake the parables was God; and although He spake not *as* God, yet the Spirit of God was upon Him, because the Lord had anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor. He had sent Him to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And that He might do so, the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, was with Him, not by measure, but fully, entirely on His individual person, as said John the Baptist. The Spirit of God, which searcheth the deep things of God, was with Him, and shewed Him the mysteries that were hidden in that creation which He Himself had made. He awaked Him morning by morning. He opened His ear to hear as the learned. The Holy Ghost made all nature an open *book* to Him. It was part of its goodness, that it was a book to that Man who was also God—a book which the Spirit of God could unfold to Him, and interpret. Whensoever He opened His eyes, He could see in the creatures all that of which they were the emblems, the symbols. Whithersoever He turned, He found a parable concerning God and His kingdom. The elements, the living creatures, the trees, the conditions of men, the relationships of human society, the arrangements of civil life, had all a divine meaning to Him. The human body, the works of men, their very infirmities and their

diseases, furnished Him with heavenly light. Need I prove this by reminding you of the parables—of the vine and its branches—of the good seed and the tares—of the sower and the soils—of the good shepherd, the sheepfold, the porter, the door, the way—of the householder and his labourers—of the nobleman—of the widow, the adversary, and the judge—of the steward—of the creditor and debtor—of the prodigal—of the man that would build a tower—of the king that would go to war? Summer, with its ripening corn, furnished Him with a lesson for His ministers. All nature, all life, spake to Him, and He could make it speak. And it was in reference to that knowledge by which He could do so, that He said to His disciples, "Know ye not this parable, and how shall ye know *all* parables? To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to the rest, in parables."

You will now easily understand me, when I say that a parable is a word, or a thing, or a fact, in which some truth of God is contained, yet in such a manner as to be concealed by it from all but the Spirit of God, and those to whom by the Spirit of God it is made known. It is contained in it, so that the Spirit which searcheth all things can bring it forth thence. It is concealed in it, so that no man can suspect it to be there. Man passeth it by. He is not obliged to perceive it. His opposition, his hatred of truth is not roused by it. It is beside him, but he is not aware of it. He has it in his hands, but he touches it not.

So, ignorant man, who otherwise would have rushed on to cast God out of His creation, who would have done what he could to obliterate and extinguish the truth concerning God, has been preserved innocent from much transgression. He knew not how often, how continually, God was meeting him. The sin, to which in the secret of his fallen heart he was yielding, was restrained by God's hiding Himself. Equally so was he withheld by the same from anticipating God's purposes, or devising and executing false, untimely, fulfilments of them. If he did fulfil them, he either did it by obedience, as called of God to act; or he did it unwittingly: he had his eyes opened, as Moses, who executed what was committed to him as a servant—or shut, as Pharaoh, who executed what was left to him to do as an enemy. So the divinity was *hid* in the man Jesus Christ. He was to be honoured, and they honoured Him, but they did it unwittingly. The children cried hosannah to the son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. But they knew not what they did. He was to be crucified—the Prince of life was to be crucified—and men did it. But when they crucified Him, they knew not what they did; and He could pray for them. The princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory, but they did it unwittingly. And so God's mercy rejoiced over judgment. True, they ought to have known Him. Among them were they whose lips should have kept knowledge. But they would not know Him; and God judged their unwillingness. He

judged it, by making those incapable who had shewn themselves to be unwilling. "Make this people's heart fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes." But it was a merciful judgment; for by means of it they did what was to be done, while they knew not what they did. So that Peter was able to say, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just; and killed the Prince of life. . . . . And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, He hath so fulfilled."

When, in the brief rapid revelation of the beginnings of the earth and its inhabitants, Moses stops to say, that the "gold of the land of Havilah was good,[1] that there was bdellium and the onyx stone;" can we suppose that he did so for the sake of the geographer, or the mineralogist, or the lapidary, and not rather because of a divine secret that was hid therein, which, in the course of future revelation, might be taught from it; a secret which, indeed, other parts of scripture do hint at —as, for instance, where it is said,[2] that the true and righteous judgments of the Lord are to be preferred to gold, yea, to much fine gold. It is said of Solomon,[3] that "he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the

[1] Gen. ii. 11, 12. [2] Ps. xix. [3] 1 Kings iv. 33, 34.

earth which had heard of his wisdom." And can we suppose that he did this after the manner and measure of the natural historian merely? Certainly not. God had given him wisdom and understanding, spiritual wisdom and understanding, by the Spirit which searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. He knew not merely the creatures, and the facts concerning them, but he knew also, in a measure, the truths which God had hidden in them. When we see, already in the days of Noah, a distinction fixed between the clean beasts and the unclean,[1] and a difference in the care and treatment provided for them, can we doubt that there was hid in them some truth or lesson for man concerning his acceptableness with God, and his suitableness for the use of God? And see how God demandeth of Job, and calleth upon him to acknowledge his ignorance of the sources and the reasons of natural things, saying,[2] "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare if thou hast understanding. . . . . Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? . . . . Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? . . . . Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which

[1] Gen. vii. [2] Job xxxviii. and xxxix.

I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" And see how God speaks in these chapters of the stars, of the clouds, of the lightning; of the lion, of the raven, of the wild goat, of the unicorn, of the peacock and ostrich, of the horse, and of the eagle. Can we read all this, and believe that God spake it Himself, and that He has taken care that it should be recorded, and remark at the same time how often the language of the New Testament seems to throw us back upon the questions of these chapters, and the mysteries of nature to which they refer, and not perceive that all these creatures, and the facts concerning them, must have some high reference to the spiritual new creation, and be full of instruction to the Church, which, by the Holy Ghost, is to understand all parables? The Psalms are full of similar references to the creatures of God, such as indicate a meaning in the creatures, higher than mere reason can search out; the Book of Proverbs also, and many of the prophets.

Still more clearly is this the case in the region of human life and its relationships. Why do men come into the world, not independent separate creatures, but by being begotten, as sons of a father? Doubtless that they may represent, in a measure, certain facts in the constitution of the Trinity itself. Why is the respect for primogeniture so deep laid in the constitution of man but for the same reason? St. Paul tells us, that the reason why a man was commanded to leave his

father and his mother, and to cleave unto his wife, was for the sake of being a parable of Christ and His Church. So the gathering of men in nations, the establishment of thrones, the universal monarchies, what are these but symbols of the throne of God's king, and of that kingdom which shall be a universal everlasting kingdom? And as *all* thrones and kingdoms were thus far representative of the kingdom of God and of His Christ, so the throne of David, and the reigns of David and of Solomon, were prefigurative of the *character* of that kingdom, of its power, of its wisdom, of its justice, and of its peace. In fact, all the acts of men are by nature significant; and where they are acts prescribed by God they are especially so. Thus all the Jewish observances, their sacrifices, their feasts, were appointed for the sake of their significancy; had their value from their significancy; lifted up into spiritual anticipations those to whom their significancy was in a measure made apparent.

We see, then, that in the creation itself God wrote certain lines concerning His own intention, lines legible to His own Spirit. In the beginning the end also was in a measure contained. In the man still more was hidden, for he was the figure of Him that was to come, the Son of God—the Christ. All things were put under His government because of Him who was to come, and who should be crowned with glory and honour, and under whom all things were to be subjected, and who should present all things unto the Father.

In the woman, formed out of his side, was to be seen that Church of the first-born, every member of which is one with Christ, and is a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Then came Cain and Abel, and in them God wrote some further lines of His wonderful and unsearchable ways, and their names reappear continually in scripture, on account of that which they had been used to exhibit. In Enoch God introduced a new part of His way with men, and of His purpose concerning them, which purpose He also further witnessed and made more perceptible to His people in the translation of Elias. In the flood He shewed the necessity of the condemnation and destruction of the fallen natural life of man; and in the ark, and its tenants, He gave a picture of the Church of the baptized. A few hints in the New Testament shew us that these things are so; that all that history of man which God thought it good to transmit, by infallible records, to subsequent generations, happened for ensamples, and was written for our learning—the beginning and the progress being made to contain instruction for the end.

Passing by the period of the Patriarchs, is it not manifest, from much of the language of scripture, that Egypt, and its wisdom, and its bondage, Pharaoh, and his pride, and the hardness of his heart, his cruelty, and his tasks of unreasonable labour, have reference to the condition and character of the natural man, after a measure of divine revelation has quickened and exalted his

faculties; and to the bondage of man's heart in the absence of the Holy Ghost; and to the weary and heavy laden estate of those who know not Christ. Of the deliverance out of Egypt, and of the Passover, and of the salvation and destruction accomplished at the Red Sea, and of the provocations in the wilderness, and of the falling of the manna, we are led, by the very manner in which they are recorded, to conjecture a spiritual meaning; a meaning which was hid in all these events, a meaning which they were intended to contain, and, in part at least, for the sake of containing which, they happened as they did happen.

Then came the giving of the law. That was a new, a wonderful, event in the history of man, when God came down from heaven; and a man was carried up within the cloud which covered the mount, and remained there forty days; and a law, a minute law was given, embracing every commonest circumstance of human life, descending even to the cattle, to the treatment of the fields, and of their produce. And there were the sacrifices, and the actions concerning them, prescribed in minutest detail; the kind of animal for the different occasions and objects of sacrifice—a sin-offering, thank-offering, peace-offering, burnt-offering; the disposal of the parts that were to be removed, of the parts that were to be offered, and of the parts that were to be eaten by the worshipers. And there was the construction of the tabernacle of witness, the prescription of its materials, of their exact weight to the talent and

the shekel, of their exact number, of their measurement by the cubit and the half cubit, of their relative position, of their mode of connection, down to the minutest loop, and tache, and pin, and socket, and tenon; of their colour and fabric, of their taking down and putting up; of the very men and their posterity who should carry them in their journeyings. And there was the dress of the high-priest, in every possible detail of it; and the utensils of silver and of gold; and the ingredients of the incense and their preparation; and the ingredients of the anointing oil, and their preparation; and there was the ordering of the tribes, and the choice of standards, and the marshalling of the host, and the rules for encampment. We believe, dear brethren, that Almighty God Himself directed all these things—by revelation made them known, enjoined upon Moses the construction of them, saying, "See thou make them all according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount." And can we suppose, for a moment, that all His purpose in doing so, was served by the setting up of a transient human polity—a polity almost immediately made to pass away, and corrupted by the sin of man; corrupted, neglected by man, in his disobedience, to such an extent, that inspiration had to record that the very first-prescribed observance, the passover itself, had been disregarded even in the best times. So that of the passover in the days of Josiah it is written:[1] "And there was no passover like to that

[1] 2 Chron. xxxv. 18, 19.

kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept." The ordinance of a sabbath for the land, we know, was immediately neglected, neglected for four hundred and ninety years. So that the giving of the laws and the ordinances failed of its end, if we say that its end was the observance of these things. And yet with what mighty signs and wonders, with what real tokens of the presence of God was the law given. We are constrained to conclude, that here also was a hiding of spiritual wisdom for the Holy Ghost to read, and to declare in the time for its declaration.

And as reason leads us to suppose, revelation instructs us. As to the provocations in the wilderness, and the events connected with them, St. Paul declares,[1] that "all these things *happened* unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." The law he shews had a higher fulfilment than the natural one to look forward to, in the conduct and in the worship of the Christian Church. He refers to the law, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn," and he sees in it a divine truth, a spiritual meaning, a law of the kingdom of God—that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. He hesitates

[1] 1 Cor. x. 11.

not to say, that it was written chiefly for the sake of laying up that truth. "Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written." And here let me remark how the natural has a blessing larger than its own, because of the spiritual, of which it is the symbol. That God's care for the spiritual may be represented, therefore He *lavishes* care on the natural. There is a preciousness and a goodness in the natural, because God has made it the grand parable of the spiritual. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father; not for its own sake merely, but because of those who are of more value than many sparrows. The *providence* of God enlarges itself beyond the worth of its immediate objects, because of the *grace* of God of which it is a figure. Because man was to give forth that seed which is the eternal incarnation of God, therefore man was from the beginning the most precious of the creatures. Yet not he alone precious, but all the creatures in their several places and their degrees of perfection are precious, as they contain some of the mysteries of the kingdom, which that seed of the woman shall reign over. God regards them, treats them, speaks of them, not alone for their own sakes, but for the sake of the morsel of divine truth which He hath fashioned them for containing.

The sacrifices, the furniture of the tabernacle, the whole construction of it—the apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, shews to have been designed with a signification higher than sense

and natural understanding could take in; concerning which he could not then speak in detail. Only he tells us, that the first tabernacle was a *figure* for the time *then* present. He calls all those things which were sprinkled with blood at the setting up of the tabernacle, the *pattern* of things in the heavens. The observances he declares to have been a *shadow* of good things to come; a shadow, not even so much as an image. And the priests who offered gifts therein, served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, "see, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount." He says—the Holy Ghost signified certain things by all and each of these. And some of these certain things, St. Paul declares—some of these certain things the Holy Ghost, the Spirit which searcheth all things, reveals to us by the hand of St. Paul. Those parts of them which He could then reveal, those parts which were necessary to the *beginnings* of the Church—to the assurance of individual believers—to the exposition of the doctrine of remission of sins, and of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for the sins of the whole world—those parts which were necessary to the revelation of the High-priesthood of our blessed Lord, and of His continual intercession. But there were other parts which He did not by St. Paul unfold. There were some parts which the apostle could not follow all the details of then. There were

parts, most profitable, most essential to a full understanding of the character of our Lord's High-priesthood, which the Church could not then receive, and did not receive. St. Paul says, He was made an High-priest after the order of Melchizedec. But what significancy was in that he was unable to delare. He knew, he could have declared. In a subsequent chapter he obscurely alludes to it, but only so as to leave it in the dark, and to indicate how much *might* be learned therefrom. The Holy Ghost withholds him from declaring it.[1] "Of whom we *have* many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." And in the ninth chapter, he enumerates various parts and instruments of the tabernacle of Moses. "The first covenant had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot *now* speak particularly. Now, when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high-priest

[1] Heb. v. 11; ix. 1-9.

alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people; the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a *figure* for the time then present." He passes by all these things, except the last, not because they had no spiritual significancy, but that he might fix attention upon that which served his immediate purpose, namely, the fact of the high-priest entering within the veil once only in the year. He expounds the entrance of the high-priest within the veil. But what the candlestick, or the table, or any part of the enumerated furniture of the tabernacle were, or what spiritual things were hidden in them, he says not—he cannot *now* speak of them particularly. Yet we know that Moses saw something, called a pattern, after which he made all these things. And we know that he was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a *testimony* of those things which were to be *spoken after;* and consequently, that the thing which he made after that pattern, and all that God gave him to speak, was a testimony of the things which were to be spoken thereafter, had its full meaning and significancy only as those things should in after times come to be spoken.

We have no right to say that *such* parts of the words and of the fabric of Moses were significant as we have received the interpretation of; and that the *other* parts terminated in themselves, because we have no interpretation of them. We

are perfectly entitled, indeed, to say, that the canon of Scripture has been closed, and that to be looking out for other books of the revealed word of God, as necessary for the guidance of the Christian Church, is to invite all sorts of delusion. We *have* the faith once given to the saints, and the whole christian revelation has been complete in the hands of the Church from the beginning; we are bound to hold *that*, and to declare it according to our power. But how that faith is contained in the patriarchal history, and in the Mosaic law, and in the tabernacle and its ritual, we are bound to expect to understand. St. Paul says, the things are hard to be uttered seeing ye are dull of hearing. If ye were not dull of hearing, they would not be hard to utter, and they would be uttered; for they are of moment—they are profitable, desirable—desirable for the establishment and illustration of your faith, and for the setting free of that meaning, which was hid in the prior revelation.

When our blessed Lord promised to send the Comforter, He said, "He shall take of mine, and shew it unto you; He will guide you into all truth, and He will shew you things to come." St. Paul prays that God would give to the Church the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened. And we have seen how the things of Christ have been hid in so many parables and concealments from the beginning of the world. And of these

things the Holy Ghost *would* have taken and shewn them unto us. At the beginning of the church He would have done so. To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. If you *can* you *may* know them. If you are not dull of hearing, you shall. If you quench not the Holy Ghost, you shall.

At the beginning of the church St. Paul says, the ends of the world are come upon you, and these things are written for your admonition. And if upon them, dear brethren, how much more urgently upon us must the ends of the world be come. The ends of the world—in which all these significant things shall reappear in the things which they signified. The end for which they happened shall be seen in those ends of the world which now arrive and gather together upon us.

Further, St. Paul says, "we have the mind of Christ." The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God; yet we have the mind of Christ. We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God—might know them in all things in which He has written them for the reading of that Spirit which is of God. And what does he mean when he says —"*We* have the mind of Christ?" Of course he means the Church has. No individual has or can have. The Lord Jesus Christ stands alone in His full possession of the Holy Ghost. No individual has His mind. What He has Himself, He imparts not to any *individual*. He imparts it to

His Church. No individual is anything more than a member of His Church. The dimensions and capability of the individual are limited. He cannot contain all the communications of the Holy Ghost. But the Church can and shall. The Church has the mind of Christ. The individual has it only as he abides in the communion of saints. By her different members the Church receives that mind, exercises it, puts it forth, communicates it. And therefore, no doubt, by some of her members should she be learning to read what God has written in all His acts, and hid in all His foregoing dispensations. As the history of the church advanced, and as the numerical fulness of the Gentiles came to be more and more nearly gathered, a wider range of comprehension should have been attained, and a more entire acquaintance with all the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. The more complete the church became in her complement of members, the more abundant were the channels through which the Holy Ghost could convey His knowledge of the things of Christ; and on our day, when the ends of the world are more truly come than on any previous generation, an accumulated light should shine, of all that which, in successive ages, and by successive members of the body of Christ, the Holy Ghost has taken and shewn of the things of Christ. For, let it be observed, that as no *individual* has the mind of Christ in the sense of the apostle, but only the Church as a whole, so no individual is the exact copy and repetition of any other individual;

no generation an exact repetition of any other generation in the Church. Through different individuals the Holy Ghost is able to impart different portions and different amounts of that communication which He continually ministers from the Head to the body. Different nations, and tribes, and languages, different generations, different circumstances of the world, in like manner, serve by their character and peculiarities to furnish vessels for the use of the Holy Ghost, of various dimensions, for various uses. And upon our day should have come down the accumulated blessing. Not as a tradition, but as a light steadily shining in the mind of the Church ; a living thing, an abundant presence and shining forth of the Lord Jesus in all things, and from all things, in which He hath from the beginning laid up for our use, the mysteries of His kingdom.

Well then, do we understand *all* parables? Do we *know* the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven? Have we the mind of Christ? Have we an accumulated light and a fuller acquaintance with the things of Christ? Nay brethren, rather, do we not look back to the beginnings of the Church, when the disciples were but a handful, and when the channels of the Holy Ghost were comparatively limited in number, do not we look back to those times as the times of fuller light? of abundant light, in the glimmer of whose faintly transmitted, expiring beams, we are making shift to see enough to save each of us his own soul? As if, then, in those days, the Holy Ghost had

taken *all* the things of Christ, and shewn them to His Church. As if one generation could have furnished channels for conveying all that the Holy Ghost had to shew; as if one generation *could* have contained the whole. And not only do we look back to those times, as peculiarly favoured with the fulfilment of that office of the Holy Ghost, but we have forgotten much of that mind of Christ which the Holy Ghost was then able to convey. It is manifest from many of St. Paul's epistles, that the Holy Ghost *had* interpreted many parts of the Old Testament Scriptures, of which we have now no interpretation. For instance, the connexion between Hagar the mother of Ishmael, Sarah's bondwoman, and Mount Sinai from whence the law was given, as both containing the same one of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, is alluded to in the Epistle to the Galatians, as a thing made known by the Holy Ghost. And the Epistle to the Hebrews, as we have already remarked, contains frequent declarations of a great deal more, which the Holy Ghost was ready to impart, should the Church grow up into an ability to hear it. But of those mysteries of the kingdom of heaven then interpreted, or of those the interpretation of which was then postponed, we have now nothing—nothing at least of any authority—nothing better than the conjectures of some guessing commentators and ingenious expounders of types.

How then, is this state of ignorance, in the very hour when light ought to have most accu-

mulated, how is it to be explained? In many ways. First, because the scriptures have come to be almost exclusively applied to individuals, and used for the sole purpose of saving individual souls. Every expression used by our Lord and by His apostles, every promise, has been limited to this. "We have the mind of Christ," has been interpreted to signify that each individual who is in a gracious state, has the same disposition, character, view, object, and intention of heart which Christ had; that is to say, to do the will of God. "The things that are freely given to us of God" have been represented as the personal free gifts of forgiveness, of sonship, of ultimate salvation, and the like. And so of all the texts which form the staple Christian sentences of our days. By which treatment of scripture, nothing indeed false is inculcated, but a great deal is lost sight of; and the holy Scriptures, and the history of man, are set aside from being a revelation of the larger purposes and operations of God toward all His creation.

A second reason of this state of ignorance is this, that Christians are not taught to look to one another as members of the risen Christ, through whom, through each of whom, it is His will to act, to speak, and if need be, to bring light and enlargement to all the rest of the members of the body. There is no communion of the Holy Ghost in spiritual giving and receiving sought for, expected, intended, between one Christian and another. There is independency where God had

appointed mutual dependence. There is sufficiency to self, dependence upon Christ alone, immediate for each, apart from his brother. Each has, therefore, just so much from Christ as the limited channel of his own mind, or of his favourite pastor, or of his zealous friend, is able to convey. And even that pastor is accepted as a channel of the Holy Ghost, not because so chosen, appointed, and constituted of God, but because he is a personal favourite, an object of admiration, and as long as he is so; and the zealous friend is accepted as a channel of the Holy Ghost, not because he is a fellow member of the body of Christ, but because he is a friend.

The consequence of this state of things is division, separation, contrariety, opposition, mutual condemnation, hatred. Christians would have their brethren to be all repetitions of one another. And they attempt this; and so produce resemblances, external conformities, and hypocritical imitations of one another; and when they have got that, they call those a church whom they have so moulded. But that which God has made men to be, none absolutely like another, but each fitted for his peculiar use and purpose, that each may act and speak his part in the great discovery of God which the Church ought to be making unto the world, and not to the world only, but even unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places; that divine combination of unity with diversity, that wisdom of revealing the unity of the unsearchable God through the numberless

diversities of the creature, and of attaining the one purpose of God, through men, each one of whom, while guided by the same Spirit, is free to the honest expression of all that is in him, whether it be of likeness to others, or of dissimilarity : this is to men incomprehensible, intolerable. Men are stumbled and offended by such diversities. They would bring their brethren into bondage to them, every man into bondage to every man. They cultivate only the points of resemblance ; and the profitable peculiarities of individuals, which indicate how God would use each, if He could, if His Church would permit Him, these are denounced, and those who yield to them are denounced and thrust away. In the large scale, this has given occasion to the larger subdivisions of the Christian church ; so that the Latin cannot bear the Greek, and the Western cannot see anything of Christ in the Eastern. One church casts all its energy into worship ; has forms of worship, days of worship, instruments and utensils of worship, and is despised as superstitious : another church is all for speaking, preaching, reasoning, hearing, judging, and it is excommunicated for irreverence. The good and wise disposition of men's characters, and of national tendencies, by which God had provided for the infinitely manifold manners and measures of His Holy Spirit, in His discoveries of the things of Christ unto men are lost to the Church ; and, worse than lost, are made the means of rending it and tearing it asunder, because the Church is not acknowledged as the one body of

Christ, from its commencement to its end, and from one corner of the world to another.

Our ignorance, then, of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and our want of ability to use the whole revelation of God contained in the holy Scriptures, arises from the quenching and straitening of the Holy Ghost by the selfishness of individuals, who will have nothing but what is visible to their own eyes, and may make for their private, spiritual benefit: from the quenching and straitening of the Holy Ghost, by Christian men receiving one another, not as members of the body of Christ, but only as men, and according to the private character of each as judged and estimated by each: from the quenching and straitening of the Holy Ghost, by the separation of one man from another, because the men were not all made by God for the same use; by the separation of one people and tribe from another people and tribe, because God would have divided severally unto each of them His Holy Spirit after a different measure. Divisions and jealousies have hindered the Church as one from benefiting by all, and everywhere, from being enriched through all, and from becoming the living storehouse of all that which the Holy Ghost had to communicate.

And on us have come the ends of the world. And we know not even yet the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. And we have not the admonition, for imparting which so many things have happened—so many things were written. And

how shall we meet the ends of the world? We cannot meet them if we have not that furniture which God in His care of us supplied for that time. The Church has done miserably ill without that furniture during all its history. But how much more miserably shall we do without it now, when all things, all events, all men, speak the same thing to us—that the last days are upon us. Our commentators, and cunning guessers at the types and mysteries, are of no use to us now. Our case is urgent. We are in need of an ascertained gift of the Holy Ghost, for bringing forth unto us the hidden treasures of knowledge concerning the kingdom. How else shall we be saved from being swallowed up in the gulph of the wisdom and ripened knowledge and power of the fleshly understanding? The god which the world worships is nearly perfected. Nothing can be withholden from men. Their tower reaches up—up into the heavens. Their word is the thing that runneth swiftly, and before which all things bow down. The merely literal, the merely intelligible, in the word of God itself, is bent, and, by a philosophic school of Christianity, conformed to the word of the proud rampant flesh. The spiritual alone is untouched, because it is hid, and cannot be touched. The parable hides it, protects it. No fleshly eye sees it. In it is our light hid. And we cannot do without it. Without it, we shall surely worship that perfected fruit of the creature's power, which is now so ready to be revealed,—worship it, take part with it, serve it, and perish with it.

We need an ascertained gift in the Church for interpreting those records and those acts of God, in which He has hidden from all but the Holy Ghost the truths that are necessary for this time. And surely the gift is not withheld by God. He did give the gifts. He knew what gifts were necessary, indispensable—and He gave them. He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. And the evangelists, pastors, and teachers we see. They are among us. They are spiritual gifts, and we are blessed through them. And what the Holy Ghost can do for us through evangelists, pastors, and teachers, standing as they do alone, He does for us. And how are they ascertained and certified to us, so that we may wait upon God through them? By trial and approval of their gifts, and by ordination, laying on of hands—such as still remains to a shattered mutilated church—that they may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. These we have; and the Church needs prophets duly ascertained, and in some manner authorized, for bringing forth the light of God, from its safe place, its hiding and repository, making us to know all parables, unfolding to us the folds and wrappings together of that mighty purpose of God, which is to come forth gradually, in its periods, at its appointed times and seasons, one of which times is now so urgently at our door.

And, oh if it were possible to think of it, some higher gift besides, by which brother might be reconciled to brother, and nation to nation, in

the Church, by which all diversities might be preserved, and hypocritical unities might be blown away, and yet all harmony might be seen again. Some higher gift, by which the sources of jealousy and division might be cleared away, and every one be set free from his brother's oppression, and be encouraged to yield himself to the Holy Ghost, and to serve along with all his brethren as a member of the one body. Then would there be light at our eventide. Some such higher gift, aye, if it were possible to think of it. But we are afraid, and slow of heart to believe in the goodness of God, and in the reality of His gifts and of His words. We are not straitened in God, we are straitened in our own bowels.

Well, but this much I ask, this much I implore you to give, this much I might be bold in Jesus Christ to demand of you; that you should at least wish for, earnestly desire, the perfecting—now at last—of the Body of Christ. For in a perfect body perfect light must reside; perfect strength for every member of it.

And if you will be persuaded to wish for this, and to ask for it, the way is shewn you in holy Scripture. "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing

behind Him; even a meat-offering, and a drink-offering, unto the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet: let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for His land, and pity His people.[1]

And now unto the Father, &c.

[1] Joel ii. 12-18.

SERMON VIII.

THE ELEMENTS OF UNITY.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)"—EPHESIANS iv. 1-10.

ONE is continually hearing the question asked and discussed, What is a true Church of Christ? Is such a one, or such another one, a true Church of Christ? It is thought a great act of charity and Christian communion to acknowledge any gathering, or denomination of Christians, for a Church of Christ. There are in Christendom a great number of separate and distinct bodies, between whom various degrees of uncertainty exist, as to whether they shall mutually acknowledge each other for Christian churches. Jealousies and

rivalries are continually springing up between them: and, while the men and women of whom they consist, for the most part live all so very much alike, that you could never suppose them to belong but to one and the same body; yet between them as bodies, or so called churches, the most zealous, violent, irreconcileable opposition is continually going on, with mutual accusations and recriminations, with mutual contempt, derision, anathemas, excommunications. In the midst of this a desire for unity has sprung up. There never was a greater desire for unity than is at present manifested. Men are speaking of it everywhere, attempting it, praying for it. Every one finds himself more or less in a position of separation from others, and conscience, with different degrees of distinctness, is chiding every man for being in such a position. Some endeavour to recover unity by receding—by retracing the steps that were taken perhaps many generations ago. Some by going forward to a new or a forgotten point, as to which no dispute has at present sprung up. Some by hoodwinking themselves, or by deceiving others, into the imagination or pretence of an unreal agreement. Let us find out, say they, some common ground. Let us cultivate one another, by having some common object. Let us fix on some common enemy, and forget our own quarrels, by learning to fight side by side. Let us bring all our zeal to bear on one common end, and so we shall accustom ourselves to walk together as brethren. All these efforts after unity are subjects

of rejoicing, and of giving thanks to God; and although they all proceed upon the false assumption that at present we are not one, and that we must do something, or make some movement or other, to make ourselves one, yet they form a feature of the time that may give us encouragement to consider what real unity is, how so precious a divine gift is given, how preserved, and what are the causes of the absence of the manifestation of unity in the existing position of the Church of Christ.

I say—absence of the manifestation of unity—for the apostolic doctrine is, that the Church *is* one. St. Paul states it as a fact, we *are* one. There *is* one body, and we are of it. We have to believe that fact. We have, by faith, to accommodate ourselves to that fact, and to act in conformity to it. If our system of thought do not proceed upon an acknowledgment of *that*, along with all other points of faith, then we *must* land ourselves in error, both of opinion and of action, sooner or later. Before God there is only one Church, and it is a wonderful and very hurtful delusion, by which men say that there are more than one.

St. Paul is, in this fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, speaking about the *visible* Church. It is concerning the visible Church that he affirms that there is one body. For he goes on to speak of its offices, rulers, guides, gifts, which are parts of the features of the *visible* thing; and he says,

"unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Unto every one of us Christians, that is to say, unto every one of us living visible men and women—all you of Ephesus—all them of Corinth—all them of Rome—unto every one is given grace to be exercised by each, for which each is responsible, which to each is the talent that our common Lord hath left with him, and that He cometh again to require with usury. I say, before God there is *one* body. He acts towards Christians as one body. And if we act upon another idea, then God's actings and our actings cannot coalesce—we cannot be fellow-workers together with Him; but our actings must resist His, oppose them, and so far as a creature's can, they must hinder the full development of His purpose. Do not misunderstand me when I say, hinder. God does *indeed* wait for His creature. He has chosen to have man for His instrument, and He waits till His instrument be in a fit state for use. He waits for man to be a willing, intelligent instrument. And in this sense man hinders Him. So long as he does not, by faith, see as God sees, and act according to the truth as it is with God, so long he is unfit, and the patience of God waits for him; and for that reason I have said, that if he refuse to learn the truth, and to admit the faith, that the body is one, he hinders God.

When one church looks at another church, it is looking at the same body of which it is itself a part—it is looking upon itself. Just as a man is

looking at himself, whether he is looking at his hand or at his feet, or at any other part of his body. When one so-called church looks upon another, it is looking upon the Body of Christ, of which body it is itself a part. If it see evil there, it sees the evil under which the Body of Christ is suffering. If it looks as God looks, it sees itself, and the evil under which it is itself suffering.

I have said that the unity of the church is a fact, a point of faith. It is as true that the Church is one, as that God is one, or that there is one Mediator between God and man, or that there is one Holy Ghost the Comforter. St. Paul says so. He tells us so—however untrue it may sound to us in this nineteenth century. "There is one body." We are not told to *make* it a fact, or to bring it about. We are told that it *is* a fact, and that if we would walk in light, we must walk in acknowledgment of *that* fact, as well as of those other facts similarly in our text affirmed by him. We must by faith accommodate ourselves to that fact. Men do not, and cannot, make the Church *one*. God is the maker of the Church, and He made it by the faith, by baptism, by the Holy Ghost, the body of one Lord, with one expectation, unto the glory of one God and Father of all.

There is "one faith." There is only one. For God does not teach different men different things. If any man have the faith, he has it by the power of God revealing it to him. If another man have

the faith, he has it by the same power of God revealing it to him, and therefore it is one faith. When Peter said, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God," Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Peter knew it by the gift of God; so the faith is imparted unto each individual. And God does not teach or impart one thing to one man, and a different thing to another man. He may impart more to one man than to another; but not contrary things to different persons. He may impart it to one man in one condition, and to another man in another condition. To one as a child, perhaps, before he is able to express what God has taught him: perhaps before he is able to make other men aware of reason or intelligence having dawned within his soul. To another—especially in such a condition of spiritual things as the present—only through long trials and mental struggles. He may impart it to one, through a channel different from that by which it is imparted to another. Faith cometh by hearing, and there are various channels through which the word of God is made audible. Men hear the preacher; so faith first begins in any land whither the gospel is sent. So it is increased in lands already Christianised. Children hear their parents, so faith begins in the child. Men hear the creed pronounced daily in the church, so may often the faith have entered and grown in the heart of others. But by all

these different ways, it is not the mere hearing, it is not the preacher's reasoning, or his power, that has acted, but God by His gift, who has imparted faith. The faith is pronounced by the lips of men, and heard by the ears of men; but faith in it is God's gift to each individual. The one faith spoken of by the apostle is not truth, or a portion of truth, existing in the abstract, existing in propositions, or embodied in formulas; but it is truth as in men by the teaching of God, spoken by men through the Holy Ghost. That which the sons of God *do* believe, that which God has put into His children —that is *the faith.* By this He has made His Church the pillar and ground of the truth. Men are accustomed loosely to say, that a man's creed is nothing if his heart be right; as our poet, so many of whose verses have become proverbs, has written, "His can't be wrong whose life is in the right." And this is true enough, if taken in a true sense. For the love of God cannot be where the truth of God is not. But as men mean it, it is most false. A man's creed is that which God has taught him. And the Church's creed is that which *God* has taught every man in it. That which God has not been the teacher of in each man, is not the faith. It is a persuasion, a transient persuasion, one of many actual or possible persuasions, and nothing more. That which, by God's gift, is believed, must be one. That which rests on man's excellency of speech, or wisdom, may be one, or it may not. It may be different in different hearers of the same word; it may be changeable in the

same individual from time to time. That which owes its being and acceptance to the power of God, is one in all who believe; unchangeably one in each, although susceptible of growth and enlargement. This is the one faith, namely the thing which the Church really believes; the thing which God really teaches, and by the belief of which God saves.

Is that the source of your faith, brethren? Is that the nature of your faith? It is a serious question; for there are many opinions, and many persuasions, and they are all good for nothing—they never saved any man. Is your faith the work of God in your hearts, or is it the opinion of your temporary leader, or perhaps the *view*, as it is called, of your pious, zealous friend? Is it a faith that makes you one with your brethren, or that makes you withdraw from your brethren? Do you discern it to be that which God teaches by His Church; the same to you, whether it be spoken by the wise or the simple among His ministers, by the able and eloquent, or by the weak; by the man whom men are following with their flatteries, or by the suckling whom they despise? And when you pronounce the Creed in the worship of the Church, as the compendious mode of making confession with the mouth unto salvation, and of professing in the ear of Almighty God that truth which He has committed unto His Church for the enlightening of all men; do you pronounce it with your fellow-worshippers, as a living utterance of the Church, by the Holy Ghost which

dwelleth therein? Seek to grow up into such lively consciousness of the faith. Stir up the faith which you *have* received. Believe as Jesus believed, that your unity with Him, and with His Church, may be made manifest.

And there is "one baptism." You have all been baptized. And you have been baptized, not into the Presbyterian Church, nor into the Episcopalian Church, nor into the Lutheran Church. You have been baptized into Christ. Men become members of the Church by being baptized into Christ. Baptism is God's instrument for uniting men to Christ, and for making men sharers with Christ. By that, His death is theirs, His resurrection is theirs, His eternal life is theirs. There is no other baptism than that. It is not a thing done by men. Men do it, but they do it by the bidding of God, and as the instruments of God, as the hands of God. There is one real doer of it, and He is God. And He does the same thing in every case. He does not do a real thing in one case, and a merely apparent and delusive thing in another case. He joins men unto Christ. Before God—in God's sight—in God's judgment and estimation, a real thing has been done, and in every case one and the same thing. And to the faith of the Church also, and of the individual baptized, a real thing has been done, and in every case one and the same thing. That which has been done to one in his baptism, the same has been done to another, to every other that has received baptism.

It has been by different hands, and in different circumstances, under various degrees of advantage or of disadvantage; perhaps with superadded rites, perhaps with deficiency of outward solemnities; perhaps among persons who knew not what was done. But from God it came. The Author of it was faithful to it. Perhaps the individual baptized knew not what was done. Yet wheresoever men have done it, as in the name of God, and because God had commanded that it should be done; wheresoever men have submitted themselves to it, or been brought unto baptism by the submission of others to it, as to an appointment of God: there, no doubt, God has not been wanting to His own ordinance. It has been the same under all unsameness of external circumstances. It has been the one instrument of God for joining men unto Christ, and they have thereby been joined unto Christ. Whatsoever union with Christ imports, that is true of any man on whom that one baptism has taken place. There are indeed many things which it infers, many things which ought to result from it, into which it should grow, in which it should issue, in the progress of a baptized man's life; there are many things which it is full of to him who with faith, patience, and zeal, hath fellowship with Christ, unto whom it has been the instrument of uniting him; which it is full of to those whom a faithful church helps to use it aright; and which the indolent, the unbelieving, those who make themselves independent of the Church, or those whom the Church fails to

embrace, and in her unity to retain—which I say all such wicked or unfortunate persons fail to obtain from it. But whether these things be obtained, or be come short of, the baptism is one and the same. Men are not baptized in the name of Paul, but of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Men are made members, not of a sect—not Methodists by baptism, not Roman Catholics by baptism, not Protestants by baptism—but one with Christ, and thereby one with all others who are one with Him. God makes us one with Him. It is a point of faith that we are thereby made one with the rest of those who are baptized with the one baptism. The unity exists. It is not a thing that needs to be brought about by *us*, but which baptized men are to believe in, for themselves, and for one another.

Brethren, upon all of you God has made this baptism to pass. You have become subjects of all its grace; you have entered upon all its responsibilities. Nothing can change that fact. To all eternity you must continue to be persons whom God has baptized. As truly as you cannot revoke your birth into the world, so truly you cannot revoke your baptism into Christ. You may have until now frustrated that divine act; you may have withdrawn your consent to it; you may have disbelieved it, and lived as though it had never taken place; you may have resisted the life of God, which *does* work and strive in all the members of the Body of Christ; you may have lived to the flesh, all your days. God compels no man

to yield to His grace. If the ground drink in the rain that cometh oft upon it, it will bring forth herbs, meet for him by whom it is dressed, and shall receive more blessing from God; if the ground reject the rain, and throw it off, it is nigh unto cursing. You cannot undo God's act, but you may reject His blessing. Only know this, that it is the Spirit of God given to you, which you are resisting; that it is the Blood shed for you which you are trampling under foot. The unspeakable gifts of God have been conferred upon you. For His gifts, you, as baptized men, shall have to answer in the day of reckoning, whether you have made by them increase unto eternal life, or have buried them in a napkin, and made yourselves heirs of the *second* death. Know yourselves to be one with Christ, one with His Church, by that act of God, your baptism. Believe it, rejoice in it; acknowledge with thanksgiving the position which God has given you; acknowledge with love the brethren similarly blessed by Him. And see that you all be helpers together, that the common grace may be fruitful, that the common unity may be manifested to the glory of God. Baptism, then, is the second element of the unity of the Church of Christ.

And there is "one Spirit." We have all been baptized by one Spirit into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. That same Spirit, by which Jesus was conceived of the blessed Virgin. That same Spirit, which was with

Him in all His life as man. That same Spirit which came upon Him at His baptism, and by which He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor. That same eternal Spirit by which He offered Himself without spot unto God. We have all received that Spirit. To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; and because they are sons, therefore God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, so that they may all call the same God their Father. Jesus said to His disciples, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." The Church can say Amen to this, for itself, and for every one that belongs to it, by reason of the one Spirit which it has received, and which is the Spirit of that Son of God who hath ascended unto God. The Spirit is one, and in the Church He is universally distributed. He is given to all those who are graffed into Christ. He is given to each, as the Spirit of adoption, as the Spirit of holiness, as the Spirit of obedience by which each may say "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God, and Thy law is within My heart:" as the Spirit of love, by which each may call all others brethren: as the Spirit of life, that our works may be all wrought in us by a present God. That Spirit, I say, is one—one throughout all the Church, one in each and every member of the Church; appearing differently in different persons, at different times, for divers uses. In some He is grieved and vexed; in some He is hindered and quenched; in some He is yielded to. In some

He is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, enlightening, replenishing the understanding, elevating the Church into worship and adoration, making plain for the Church the mysteries of God. In some He is a Spirit of reproof, for detecting to men's consciences the errors and corruptions into which they have fallen, and for their recovery out of the snares of the devil. In some He is a Spirit of power, for bearing the word of God to those who have not heard it, and for breaking a way into those hearts which the truth has not yet entered; for casting out devils, for healing the sick, for raising the dead. All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing unto every man severally as He will. And as unto every *man* severally as He will, so unto every people, or to every gathering together of such men as have first been made one with Christ, and as come together in the name of Christ. His gifts and operations various; Himself the same. The same, whether in one He groan being burdened, or in another He rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Whether, under His hand, one man, conscious of his ingratitude and unfaithfulness, be repenting and saying "God be merciful to me a sinner," or another be pronouncing the assurances of pardon and peace; or one man be fleeing to another city, while another is giving his body to be burned; whether He but faintly and insensibly breathe, under the additions and accumulations of fleshly, human inventions and observances, or tremblingly linger where men

have cleared away almost even the last rites and ordinances of God. In all these He is the same Spirit. Man's judgment may not discern it so. Man may not be able to perceive the oneness. Yet the Spirit, in all the Church, under all the different manners of His manifestation, in all the different forms of His acting, in all that He feels, in all that He expresses, under all the bonds, limitations, and hindrances, which for the present He submits to, for the sake of men whose unbelief, or selfishness, or infirmities, do so hinder and limit Him, *is* the same. It is a matter of faith that He is the same. Even as it was the same Spirit who spake by the untaught lips of the gatherer of summer fruit, and by the cultivated tongue of Ezekiel the priest, by the song of Deborah, and by the proverbs of Solomon, so now, through all the Church, the one Spirit expresses Himself. It was the same hallelujah that rose from all the musical instruments which David had appointed for the temple, differently, yet harmoniously; and it is in like manner one Spirit, who, through all the members of the body of Christ, expresseth Himself, differently, to different effects, yet with a harmony known to Himself; credible to those who fear God; discernible for those who have faith. For the Holy Ghost does not dwell in the Church for the purpose of giving expression to the feelings, or desires, or conditions of individual persons; but He dwells in the Church, that God may be on the earth—made known on the earth—worshipped on the earth. By the Holy

Ghost God is present on the earth, through men. By the Holy Ghost He is made known, through men. By the Holy Ghost His heart is expressed, by men—such men, that is to say, as have first been made members of Christ. By the Holy Ghost He is worshipped by men, in spirit and in truth. God blesseth those whom He dwells in; but He dwells in them not merely for the purpose of blessing them, but for His own purposes. His Spirit does express their necessities, and make intercessions, and groanings unutterable; but only because He seeks to express by them further and larger things—because through them He seeks to have a continual voice of man in the ear of God, spoken on the earth, in harmony with that voice of man, which the man Jesus Christ speaks in the ear of God continually in heaven. And when you worship God in the church, you come not to make your own requests, but to present the common prayer. You come as vessels of the Holy Ghost, as vessels of God, to use those prayers, and other instruments of worship, which for each day are provided, doubting nothing that by them shall God, through the Holy Ghost in you, be worshipped from day to day.

What unspeakable value does not this give to every member of the Church of Christ? Every one has his value, his own value. He is valuable, profitable to God, to the whole Church, to each member of the Church. The child who was baptized yesterday, the old man who is sinking under the load of his infirmities, the Christian prince,

and the Christian peasant, the honourable man, and the obscure, they have all their value as vessels of the Spirit. Should not each value the other, each profit the other, each be profited by the other? In doing so, are not we at one with God, who useth all, and condescendeth to see a profitableness in us all? Should not we in common stir up the common spiritual life, that the Holy Ghost may do His will freely, up to the full limits of that body of Christ in which He dwelleth? Shall not we adore Him who, by the mighty work of our Redeemer, has advanced us, who are the children of wrath, to become vessels of the Holy Ghost, and instruments of the presence of God: adore Him with continual thanksgiving, and dedication of ourselves to Him? And having come under such responsibilities, for the preservation and the right use of His holy gifts, may not we well tremble? For there is indeed such a thing as being made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and yet falling away. And what must he fall into who falls away from such a possession as that? 'Tis not the loss of life, though that be a precious gift of God; 'tis not the loss of a personal advantage; but it is the loss of a rich trust. It is the driving away of a person, a divine inhabitant. What befalleth him who is delivered from the unclean spirit, if he will not have the Holy Ghost to dwell in him? With what sevenfold power shall not Satan prevail against him, who chooses to cease from being a temple of the Holy Ghost? He is no longer a mere son of fallen Adam, but—

far worse—he is a Christian man who has put away from him the Spirit of Christ. "The last state of that man is worse than the first."

And there is *one Lord.* "That same Jesus, whom ye crucified, hath God made Lord." He descended first, and then God raised Him up, and set Him on His own right hand, and made Him Prince. So He ascended to fill all things. He is Lord of all; head of the Church; head over all things for the Church. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" said He to His disciples, when He instructed them to go into all the world; when He sent them with that one faith, to preach; with that one baptism, to baptize. When He became Lord, He sent them. He alone was their Master and Lord. They had none other to fear, none other to obey. As Lord He sent the Holy Ghost. He baptized with the Holy Ghost. *He* gave all that the Church received. He was the giver of it. The Holy Ghost in the Church calleth Him Lord, takes of the things of Christ, and shews them unto the Church. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them *now.* Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of *Himself;* but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine

and shall shew it unto you."[1] The Holy Ghost calleth Jesus Lord. He is Himself the Spirit of the Lord. The Lord over men is a man. God hath given Him authority, "*because* He is the Son of man."[2] A spirit which would make itself lord, or would be lord along with Jesus Christ, or would be lord as the representative and substitute of Jesus Christ, during the period of His absence from His Church—any such spirit, I say, is not the Holy Ghost. The man Jesus Christ is our Lord. He *sent* the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost acts in reference to Him, and for His purposes. All that the Holy Ghost does is for the use of Jesus Christ. It is for accomplishing His will. All things are given into the hand of Jesus, because He perfectly obeyed, and proved Himself through all trial, to be the obedient Son. He obeyed to the utmost limit of obedience, "until death."[3] He chose rather to die than to disobey. He so loved His Father's will, He so loved those whom His Father loved, that He chose to die rather than cease to love His will and them. Therefore He was proved the fit Lord of all, for accomplishing in all God's holy will. And God set Him so. And hath left in His hands all things, that He may bring to pass all the eternal purpose and counsel of God. This is the meaning of that which is written, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the

[1] John xvi. 12-15. [2] John v. 27. [3] Μεχρι.

likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father."[1] And men are given to Him by God. God gave Him power over all flesh. Out of them He gathers and forms His Church, which is His body. As of the substance of the Virgin He did by the Holy Ghost take His personal body, so of the men that are in the world He takes by the Holy Ghost His mystical Body. Those whom He takes He uses. He is Lord, and He hath a law and order which they do obey. As in nature, by its laws the members obey and do the will of the man whose members they are: so the members of the body of Christ are to obey and to do the will of Him to whom *they* belong. Their powers are given by Him. As He is Lord He gives them their powers, their spiritual gifts. And their powers are for His use. Not for their own pleasure, not for their own objects. Nay, often, for their own sorrow, even to the denial of their own natural objects. Not for the pleasure of men. Holiness unto the Lord *alone* is written upon every vessel of the sanctuary. Men do not know all the purposes of God. Some part of it is made known

[1] Phil. ii. 6-11.

to them. All that they can bear is made known to them. All with which they can be entrusted is entrusted to them. But Jesus knows the counsels of Eternity, and by means of men, by means of the members of His body, He fulfils these counsels, and shall fulfil them. They that are His do all things in His name. Whatever is the end for which He is made Lord, unto the same end they are made members of His body. Whatsoever they do, they do as His. They are His presence in the earth; by them He acts and speaks in the midst of the earth. By them He shall speak and act still more widely and largely in the kingdom that is to come.

Shall we then say, "Who is Lord over us"? Shall we say of anything, "It is our own"? Shall we use His name of Lord for any use or purpose, save those for which His Father gave it Him? Shall we cause to serve us Him whom God hath made Lord? Shall not we forget ourselves, as He forgot Himself? Shall we call men lords, except as they are men by whom He ministers His law? Shall we exalt ourselves to be lords over any part of God's heritage? But while we are jealous for the liberty of ourselves, and jealous lest we allow any one to surrender his liberty to us, let us also think this, that there cannot be a host without command and obedience. The will of the Lord of it must be in it paramount, alone. And there must be those through whom that will is expressed and signified. The control of the chief captain must be felt through means of the

officers in all their gradations. He that heareth you heareth Me, is the sanction of the authority of those who bear rule in the Church of Christ. Woe is to the ruler who calleth not Jesus Lord alone. But woe unto him that should be subject and yieldeth not obedience to the ruler. The ruler may err, but the Lord alone is his judge. He is his judge by means of a higher, an intermediate ruler, if such there be. If there be none, He is judge in the heavens. And "He setteth bounds to the wicked that they cannot pass." The ruled is not judge—all the ruled taken as one man are not judge. Who can judge justly, if the cause be his own, or if by sympathy he make it his own? Who can judge justly, save he who is appointed to judge? God is with him who is set as a judge. He is for a spirit of judgment to them that sit in the gate. But He is only for a spirit of obedience to them who sit not in the gate. Jesus is the Lord. We are His host. Let us learn His law, and regard His holy order, and keep our ranks: that He may be manifested as Lord, and that His will may be fulfilled to the glory of God the Father. Let us do it zealously, for we live in the world, which says, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Against their spirit we must watch—against their spirit which everything around us breathes, and utters, and which comes in upon the Church to extinguish its very life. We are witnesses—not by talking, but by obeying. And many shall be saved by our testimony. There are thousands who see the errors of the day, who are

weary of the vain writhings and bootless tossings of the self-avenging multitude. By our witness, by the sight of our obedience and godly order, by our reverence for the statutes and ordinances of His house, by our submission to those to whom the Lord hath given in charge the exercise of His authority, these thousands shall be saved. They are seeking some well ordered host. They are wandering after the hosts which zealous men have ordered—the rules of St. Dominic and St. Ignatius—societies, alliances cast up like foam on the restless waters—hosts gathered by some word of man, ordered after some tradition, or commandment of men. They are wandering after these. Let them therefore see the true host, and let its order and dutifulness appear; and they shall know their Lord's work, and be saved. And if men *will* take counsel against the Lord and His anointed, we will be patient; for we know that He *shall* reign, and that the kingdoms of this world *shall* become the kingdom of our Lord.[1]

And there is "one hope of our calling"—common to all the body—common to the Head, and to all the members. And that hope shall be attained through resurrection. As by resurrection the Head was completed, so by the same shall all the members be completed. The body of sin and death makes it impossible for us to receive our hope in this present state. Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God. We have the

[1] Rev. xi.

first-fruits of the Spirit, but we have not the hope of our calling. We have the *earnest* of our inheritance, but not our inheritance. We hope for it. Even He who is at the right hand of God expecteth. He, from the time of His ascension until this day, expecteth somewhat. "Sit Thou at My right hand," said Jehovah unto Him, "*until* I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." From the time of His ascension until this day, He expecteth, until His enemies be made His footstool. He hath gone to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. And that kingdom is our hope. The call of the gospel was a call to the inheritance of that kingdom. The use of the Church towards men has hitherto been to gather all who shall belong to that kingdom, and to prepare them for it. The Holy Ghost has been given for the purpose of testifying of that kingdom, of enabling us to live as citizens of that kingdom, and of preparing us, by the same Spirit, to reign therein. We are a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. He who died for us hath made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign with Him. Those who have not wickedly hid their talent, their *Lord's* money, shall have authority. They shall enter into the joy of their Lord, when He shall enter into His joy. They shall enter together; not without one another. By no haste, by no oversight, by no negligence, by no want of love, shall any be forgotten or left behind. *The hope is one*, the common hope. The souls under the altar cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou

not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth;" and it was said unto them, your portion is still hope. "Rest yet for a little season, until your fellow-servants, and your brethren, that shall be killed as you were, shall be fulfilled." The hope of the dead and the hope of the living is one and the same. The hope is one in the call, and it shall be one in the consummation. They shall enter into it together. And what expanding fulness that hope may be found to contain, even to the filling into immensity, stretching forth with eternity, no finite creature can imagine. Only we know this, that His Church shall be eternally one with Him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords;—the Lamb's wife. And His word shall be in her, and His light. And with these, through the Holy Ghost, to carry the knowledge of the Lord, and of God through Him, as the stars send their rays through all the universe, may well be supposed a part of her office. And worship, and praise, a part of the same. The carrying forth of blessing, and the returning again with thanksgiving, as on the ladder which eternally joins together the Creator and the work of His hands. The hope is such. It is one. One for all, in which all are interested, in which, through love, all are interested, not for themselves alone, but for one another.

This is the common hope. And shall we not fear lest any should even *seem* to come short of it? What a thought—to be heirs of such an inheritance, and yet perhaps to lose it! And having

lost it, is there any other left for us to gain? Esau got a blessing. He could fall back upon something. But they that are members of Jesus Christ, can fall back upon nothing—nothing but a portion in the outer darkness.

It is a full and glorious hope. And it is the hope of every member of Christ. There is Lazarus with his sores. And this hope is making him glad, and patient, and grateful. There is Dives also, and this hope is given to him: well for him if it be not forgotten, amid the splendour of purple and of gold, and the sumptuous fare; amid the flatteries of those who praise him that doeth well unto himself. It is the common hope of these two men, and by that hope they shall be saved, for by it they shall both be able to cleave to their choice of the better part, and to wait sorrowing with the Church for the day when their Lord shall reign.

And there is "*one God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Jesus Christ is Lord, not for Himself, but for the glory of God the Father. In all which He does and executes, He has respect to the will of the Father. He is indeed God, equal with the Father, but, as He is Lord and Christ, He has undertaken an office. He has a charge. He is God's servant. He is fulfilling the will of the Father, and as Lord and Christ He shall ever be subject unto the Father, even when He hath accomplished that which the Father hath given Him to do. As it

is said, "When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." As the head of every man is Christ, so the head of Christ is God. As all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, so Christ is God's.

The Holy Scripture teaches us plainly, that the Father is that divine person, in whom Godhead in its absoluteness, and in its incommunicable attributes, dwells, as in the unapproachable holy of holies; while the Son is that person in whom Godhead is revealed; and the Holy Ghost that person in whom Godhead communicates itself, and dwells in the creature. He that hath seen Jesus, hath seen the Father. He that hath seen the incarnate Son, hath seen the Father, and hath known that the Father sent Him to be the Saviour of the world. And as Jesus the Son walked on the earth, visible to men, speaking to men, doing works before men; so the Holy Ghost, invisible to men, unknowable by men, dwelleth with those who are one with the Son, is *in* them,—is in each of them. By the incarnate Son, by the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of the Lord, God the Father is through all, and in *us* all. Through all as separate from them, but in *us* all, not as separate from *us*, but one with us. In us, not as exercising an influence on us as a foreign thing, but as the very life of those who are one with Christ. For we have been made partakers of the divine nature —we are a new creature. Therefore it is that

we do all things in the name of the Son, because God hath made Him our head: but we do all things by the Holy Ghost, because He is our life. We worship in the name of the Son, because He is our High Priest, because we are in Him; but we worship in the Holy Ghost, because only when sustained by the Spirit can we bear to approach the presence of God, and only in the Holy Ghost can we offer a holy worship.

But our blessed Lord said, Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. And He was glorified; and, being glorified, He immediately began to gather His Church, that He might glorify the Father therewith. And the end of all His operations is, that God as God may be all in all—not God as incarnate—not God as dwelling in men—but God as God may be all in all.

The perfection of all things shall be attained in the revelation of His unity.

All these, I say, brethren, are the elements of the unity of the Church. The recovery of the unity of the Church shall not be the working out of a new thing. It shall be merely a return of men to the faith that the Church is one, one in these several ways and particulars. God is the teacher of all, and He teaches only one faith, only one truth. God is the baptizer of all who are baptized; and He baptizes only into the body of Christ. They are not members of various bodies, but of one, and, whether they know it or not, they are, by their baptism, members of one another.

The Holy Ghost is one, dwelling in all; endeavouring in every one to do the same thing, namely, to make them in all things like to Christ, whose Spirit He is; endeavouring through all together, according to their various parts, to accomplish one thing, namely, the worship of God, and the performance and execution of His work, until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that the condition of all is alike, they are under the hand of the Holy Ghost; and the sin of all is alike, that of quenching, grieving, and striving against the Holy Ghost; and the judgment of all shall be for one and the same thing, even their manner of receiving the Holy Ghost, their submission to the Holy Ghost, or rejection of Him. And He dwells and works in them as one—not wholly in any man; not independently in any man; not sufficiently in any one man for that one man, but wholly in the whole; in each man dependently upon every other man; sufficiently for each, by all that He accomplishes in the whole. And the Lord is one; holding all for one purpose; ruling all for one end; setting each one in his own order, rank, office, administration, and work; using all for accomplishing His will, and not the will of any of *them:* equally Lord of each, by the double right, that He hath purchased each with His own blood, and that His Father hath given them unto Him out of the world. And the hope is one, and shall be possessed by all together; not by one before another, not by one without another; possessed by all, save those who sell it like Esau,

or who envy their brother his share in it like Cain; or who rebel against the Lord, and would be lords themselves; or who reject the Spirit, which is common to all, and will have a spirit that is whole and entire to themselves; or who deny that God has baptized them; or who deny that God has baptized their brethren. And the God and Father of all is one—unto whom all shall be offered at last, as the grand offering and sacrifice—one—spotless—complete—spiritual.

What arguments are there not here for manifesting unity; what reasons for loving one another?

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON IX.

CAUSES OF THE ABSENCE OF THE MANIFESTATION OF UNITY, AND HOPE OF ITS RECOVERY.

EZEKIEL xxxvii. 1-14.

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again He said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus said the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said He unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied, as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

"Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live; and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."

THIS is a parable representing the condition into which the people of God under the old covenant had fallen, representing also the thoughts and intentions of God concerning them in that condition, representing what He could do, declaring what He would yet do for them. He had made them for His praise. They were a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. They alone, of all people, were on the earth, in the midst of men, for making the true God known. That was their calling, their office. The name of the true God was put upon them; the glory of God on the earth was committed to their charge. His truth was laid up in them. The fortunes of the name of God among mankind were wrapped up with their history. By them it should be revealed. From them should the light of the knowledge of Him spread itself, for the obedience and worship of all men—for the blessing of all men. The law should go out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. They should be in the midst of men as a dew from the Lord—bringing refreshment—shedding life abroad.

But Israel did not fulfil their calling. They did not know, or believe their calling. By an early prophet, God had said, "Israel is an empty vine. He bringeth forth fruit unto himself." He used God's gifts for himself. He regarded not the object of God. He received abundantly from Him and glorified himself, and lived deliciously therewith. But he stood to the world an empty thing for the world, and made God seem empty for the

world. God replenished him, that he might replenish others. God was good to him, that through him others might know how good God was. But he scattered not abroad of that with which God had enriched him;—and the world learned not how good God was. When Abraham, the friend of God, was carried about into different countries and kingdoms, men saw in him the goodness of God. They learned from him to know the true God. He was a prophet in the midst of the nations. He prayed for them, and they were blessed. "God is with thee in all that thou doest," said they. "We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee, and we said, let there be now an oath betwixt us."[1] Such witnesses were Abraham and Isaac. And their children should have been the same, but they were not. They stood towards the earth in an attitude of separation, antagonism, superiority; instead of an attitude of friendship, human brotherhood, sympathy, helpfulness, keeping the house of God as a house of prayer for all nations. The more God enriched them, the more they lifted up their head in pride and separation. They forgot that they were but common men—like all other men. They forgot that their honours and their blessings, their knowledge and light, their fulness and abundance, proceeded not from themselves, but from Him who had put His name upon them. "According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore they forgat God." They forgot

[1] Gen. xxi. 22 : xxvi. 28.

what they were when He found them in Egypt—bondmen, slaves. They forgot their feebleness and their helpless dependence when He knew them in the wilderness—"in the land of great drought." They pleased themselves with God's gifts, instead of yielding up themselves for His use.

And they forgot His law. His *law* had been framed for a continual setting forth of Him. His tabernacle—the temple of Solomon—were framed for a continual setting forth of Him. Unity was necessary for the attainment of this object. The tabernacle with its altar was the only point of unity: the one lawful place of sacrifice: "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offering in every place that thou seest: but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings. . . . Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thine oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand: but thou must eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, . . . thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take and go unto the place which the Lord shall choose."[1] So imperatively binding was this law, that a voluntary sacrifice at a place of a man's own choosing was reckoned mere bloodshed. Such was the severity of those sanctions by which God did provide against the

[1] Deut. xii.

violation of unity. By securing this unity, He provided for the true and faithful manifestation of Himself. But they did violate it.

The daily sacrifices; the annual feasts; the institution of the priests and the Levites; the assembling of all the males three times every year at the city where God had put His name; all these were meant for a continual setting forth of Him. The Sabbath; the seventh year; the year of Jubilee; the devoting of their firstborn males; the consecrating of their tithes; all these institutions were God's means of using that people for His name. And they neglected them. The priests themselves neglected them. The lame, the sick, the blind, of their flocks were thought good enough for God's altar. Polluted bread was offered there. The Sabbath was a weariness. They robbed God in tithes and offerings. They gave His Nazarites wine to drink. The land rested not every seventh year. They grudged the year of release and jubilee to their brethren, and would not let them go free. God, who would have revealed Himself through these institutions, keeping them in mind of Him daily, making Himself known through them to all men, could not. He was hindered. He could not keep them in mind of Him. He could not make Himself known through them. They became ignorant of Him. They gave His glory to other gods. To themselves, saying, "The temple of the Lord are these."[1] They imagined a God,

[1] Jer. vii.

and worshipped their imagination. They made idols, and bowed down to them. They converted the ordinances of God into idols. And God let them alone.

And so—a people who should have been a lively, united, continual exhibition and commendation of the true God to all the inhabitants of the earth, in whom a present God might have acted and manifested Himself, became a mere congeries of dead bones. Dead, because they had forgotten God; dead, because God was not yielded to by them; dead, because they had refused to serve Him, and had caused Him to depart and hide Himself. They were living men, but they were dead bones. As a people they had no common action. There was every one for himself, and by himself. Each going to his own altar; sacrificing to his own god; expecting from such god as he had chosen for himself; ascribing glory to such god as he had chosen for himself. They were no longer a people as they had been made of God, for His praise. They were without a common worship and point of unity—single individuals—dry bones—men without the living God. The place of their captivity as men is reckoned the field of their graves as the witnesses of God.

Yet, even in this condition, they are more precious than other men. God never forgot His covenant with their fathers. He had put His name upon them. He remembered them for His own name's sake. He oft repented for His holy

name's sake. They had made His name to be blasphemed. But He would vindicate the glory of His own name, even there where it had been made contemptible. He prophesied. He spake unto the bones. He declared, He prophesied what He would do. And in the vision that of which He prophesied began and happened. Under that prophesying bone was brought to his bone. No longer lay they a confused indiscriminate heap; but each came to his place when *God* spake. Men's wishes, men's words, men's efforts had left them a heap—only made the heap more confused than before. But now God spake, and bone came to his bone. They accommodate themselves to their places. Envy is stilled. Ambition is silent. Self is forgotten. There is no grasping for preeminence. Under the divine word, divine order grows up. They are fitted one to another; they are fitted each to his place. The calling of God is without repentance, and each man's call finds him out. And then, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them; that by means of which a common will might move them all to a common end; and the skin covered them above; a complete organization, beautiful, lacking nothing; every member formed again—every function provided. But there was no breath in them. And God spake again. By the mouth of a man God spake. And when the man spake that which God commanded him to speak, in other words, when God spake by him, the breath came into them, and they lived and stood upon

their feet, an exceeding great army—a great host for the Lord of hosts.

This was the vision—the parable.

And the interpretation of it was. The whole *house* of Israel say, "our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts." We have sinned past recovery. We have so caused the name of God to be blasphemed, that He has taken off His name from *us*. We are no longer called by His name. We have so long forgotten and forsaken Him, that He has forgotten, doubtless He has forgotten and forsaken us. So Satan reasons and tempts. But not so speaks the Lord. He speaks this parable to them. He revives their faith in Him. He calls them away from their own thoughts. "My thoughts are higher than your thoughts." "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help found." "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live; and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."[1]

We are the people of God under the New Testament. The Church is the people whom

[1] Ezek. xxxvii. 12, 13, 14.

He has made for His praise. The Church is the kingdom of priests and holy nation now. *Now*, during *this* part of the mighty actings of God. His name is now upon His *Church*. Israel was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; unto Moses the *servant* in the house of God; and so, they became the people of God through that servant. God was with them and spake to them by that faithful servant. But God has come to us, and spoken to *us* by His Son, and we have been baptized into Him. The name of God was put upon them through that servant. But the name of God is put upon *us*, by our being baptized into the *very* Son. We and our children have received the name of God by baptism into the Son of God. The true God is the God and Father of Jesus Christ. And He is our God and Father, in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has brought us unto God; reconciled us unto God. By His own most precious blood, He has redeemed us and reconciled us unto God, that we might receive the adoption of children. We are the house of God. The Church is His body, the body of God's Christ. That body is called by the name of God. His name, His glory, is for the present, committed to that body. Through that body shall His name be known or unknown; proclaimed truly, manifested truly, or hid—forgotten on the earth during this Christian day. Whatever happens to the name of God in the earth, be it honour or dishonour, be it worship or blasphemy, depends at present upon the Christian Church.

Under the former covenant He had one people, amongst whom He was, and through whom it was His pleasure to become known to all other people. Under the present covenant, He has one people, among whom He is. By them He wills to make Himself known. *By* them; not *without* them. That is the place which He gives to His Church. That is the calling with which she is called. That is the object of His acts towards His Church. It is the reason of His enriching her with spiritual blessings in the heavenly places, even that through His Church His name might be known on the earth, and that there might be a house of prayer for all nations.[1] I do not mean, known by preaching the gospel merely. The gospel is preached that the Church may be gathered out from among men: and until the last member of the body of Christ be found, the gospel shall be so preached. But God is known through the Church of Christ, not merely by preaching the gospel. He is made known through the *spectacle* of the Church, by its acts and its movements. He is made known by the appearance of the living temple. He is made known by the going to and fro of Christian men in the Spirit of God, with the mind of God, with the graciousness of God, in the truth and righteousness of God, as God would go to and fro, as Jesus did go to and fro. He is made known by Christian men walking in the light, while the rest of men are in darkness—walking in love, speaking the

[1] Eph. i. 3-6: Phil. ii. 14-16.

truth in love, while other men are walking in envy. He is made known by Christian men submitting themselves to every ordinance of God for conscience sake, while all other men are rebelling against the same ordinances, and feeling them an oppression. He is made known by the order and harmony of Christian society, and by the peace and blessing which that order produces. He is made known by the child who honours his father and mother; by the husbands and wives who fulfil their responsibilities; by the pastors and flocks who fulfil theirs; by those who submit to them who have the rule over them in the Lord; by them that are subject to principalities and powers, who obey magistrates, and are ready unto every good work, who speak no evil of any man, and are gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. By all such, I say, God is made known—His nature, His will is made known. God is glorified by them.

Observe the structure of the apostolical epistles. Do not the apostles ever recur to the inculcation of these ordinary duties? They put to rights the matter of doctrine, or give the orders and directions which had been the immediate call and occasion of writing the epistle, and then hasten to urge a meek and dutiful observance of all the relationships, natural and spiritual. This is the structure of all the apostolic epistles. Take up which of them you will, you shall find this the structure of it. The Christians are to live as men among men. The Holy Ghost is given them,

God worketh in them, to the end that they may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, shining among men as the lights of the world, holding forth the word of life. For this the Church exists at present. It has a higher calling, a higher calling shall be the reward attained by it, if it fulfil its present calling. To be for God among men, to be His witness, and the evidence of His goodness, and love, and truth, from generation to generation, that is its present office. It has been entrusted with that; it has been and continues to be furnished with heavenly furniture, organized with divine ordinances and arrangements, for the sake of that. All who belong to it have been brought into it for the sake of that. They are joined together for the sake of that. They are endowed with various gifts, each with his own gift, for the sake of that. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each of them, according to his measure, for the sake of it. By the effectual working in the measure of every part, by each stirring up his own gift, and himself benefiting by the exercise of all other gifts in all other members of the body, thus should the body make increase, and build itself up in love that it may witness for God. This is the present, immediate, urgent use of that people who are baptized into Christ, and who are called the Church. Our blessed Lord prayed that they might be one. "That they all may be one; as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast

sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."[1] It was that the world might have a witness for God in the midst of it. A witness such as Jesus had been; who spake the words of His Father; who did the works of His Father. He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And so He witnessed for God. And we have an unction from the Holy One. And St. Paul teaches us how to use it; partly as members one of another within the Church; partly in the relations of domestic life; partly in the public relations of civil life; the general rule being—"no one liveth unto himself." The exercise of the Christian virtues, their cultivation, their practical school, is found in human life by means of the relationships of human life. These relationships provide the opportunities of that witness concerning God, which the Church is intended to bear. Even the various divine offices and observances in the Church are meant to qualify men for fulfilling the daily ordinary duties. You go to church that you may receive there such blessing of God as shall enable you to fulfil your present mission among mankind. And this mission you fulfil by being

[1] John xvii. 21, 22, 23.

good men and women. You go to church indeed that the worship of God may be fulfilled; you celebrate the Lord's Supper, that the death of Jesus Christ may be shown forth until He come again: but in regard to that place, visible among men, and towards men, which God has assigned to His Church, you wait upon His ordinances, that you may be enabled to act in every relationship of life as none have grace to act except baptized men only.

Israel failed as a witness for God. He made God's name to be blasphemed. And the Christian Church, the body of Christ, how has it fulfilled the witness? For a little while it spake the truth in love, and abode in the ordinances of God; and while it did so, God confirmed its testimony by miracles and signs, such as should follow them that believe. But the Church began to magnify itself, and to shew itself as a great thing, and to use God's gifts and His beauty which He had put upon it, for the purpose of standing as a great thing on the earth, among the great things that were in the earth. Men began to seek their own; with knowledge to puff themselves up, instead of with love to edify one another and to be builded together an habitation of God through the Spirit. There were divisions among them. They separated after favourite leaders. They tarried not for one another, even when they ate the Lord's Supper. They were zealous of spiritual gifts for the sake of personal advantage. They used their spiritual gifts, not that the Church might receive

edifying, but in emulation, for the sake of individual excellency. Even in the Church itself and its assemblies, they made God seem the author not of peace but of confusion. They violated decency and good order. They did not bear the word of admonition. They questioned St. Paul's authority. Such a spirit did they begin to shew, that Paul, when he sent Timothy to Corinth, he was obliged to ask a *Christian* church, that Timothy might be among them without fear! From these divisions, and this following of leaders, in whom some spiritual gift gave personal excellency and advantage, came divergences of opinion —enquiries such as ministered questions rather than godly edifying. Even in Ephesus, where St. Paul had been able to speak out concerning the mystery of God in the Gentile church, in a larger and fuller measure than he appears to have been able to do to any other of the churches; even in Ephesus, he had to set Timothy to a great fight with the proud men and perverse disputers in the church there, through whose profane and vain babblings and oppositions of false knowledge,—no doubt through *abuse* of spiritual gifts, or under pretence of, in imitation of, spiritual gifts—the church was in hazard of being led into error. So rooted was the evil there, it so went on and indicated to what an extent it would attain, that St. Paul was obliged to write to Timothy a second time still more earnestly. In this second epistle he not only teaches him by what divine arts of

love and gentleness he might instruct those who opposed themselves, and if possible bring them to repentance, and so recover them out of the snare of the devil; but he tells him not to be astonished. St. Timothy was of a gentle spirit. He was a youth—liable to be despised,—tempted to allow men to despise him. He was easily hurt by the new element of discord and disobedience into which he had been cast. Is this, then, the Church of God? Is this God's family I am in, and the house of God's children? Is this to be the history of the Church of Christ? Yes, Timothy, be not staggered—stumble not. It is even so. The tares are springing up. Is not all Asia turned away from me? These *are* God's children. Beware—say not to them: "Ye are *not* God's children." Moses, the meekest of men, was provoked, and spoke unadvisedly with his lips in similar circumstances, and in consequence was not permitted to enter the promised land. He was provoked, and he called God's people rebels. Say not, "ye rebels." The time shall come for distinguishing the good from the bad, the stedfast from those who fall from their stedfastness. Say not, "ye are not His children." They *are* His children. There lies their sin—they are wicked children. God said of old: "Oh that My people had hearkened to My commandments, and Israel had walked in My ways." With such entreaties go after these sheep of Christ. With such love be ready to meet these prodigals. Their Father disowneth them not. Peradventure He will give

them repentance. If any of you do err from the truth, and one turn him again, he shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins. *What* then! Shall any child of God perish? No, not one, if you Timothy, and all others, will do your part and serve them. Yet, if it *should* be so, that they do perish, hold fast your own faith. He who said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," said also that it was possible for the salt to "lose its savour." He who told them that they were the light of the world, gave them also to understand that their light might become darkness. If some be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; if some depart from the living God; if some fail to apprehend that resurrection for which they have been apprehended of God, let it not stagger Timothy's faith. We are not made partakers of Christ, if we do not hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end. It is possible, if men will *not* go on, but linger about the first principles and laying of the foundations "ever learning," it is possible that they may fall away, and never be renewed again unto repentance; it *is* possible, *even* for *those* who were once enlightened, and who were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. Those who say they are rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing; who are puffed up for themselves, and who bring forth fruit for themselves, shall be spued out of the mouth of God. Nay, not only is Timothy not to be staggered at this,

he must know somewhat more. For God has revealed it unto Paul, that in the last days perilous times shall come—perilous times in the church; for men shall be lovers of themselves.[1] Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse; evil men *in the Church*—for there was no occasion to prophesy of evil men out of the Church, Timothy did not need to be told of *them.* A time is coming when they will not endure sound doctrine; when they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. And he tells Timothy to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. He has himself been obliged to deliver some over to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme. One or two of the worst offenders are to be dealt with sharply, and saved by fear, that the rest may be intimidated. St. Jude, writing about the same period, speaks still more strongly of the evils that were now found in the family of God. He calls some of the members of the church murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, speaking great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage. He compares them to Cain, the hater of his brother; to Balaam, who wished to prophesy against God's people; to Core, who accused Moses of taking too much upon him. They are men who separate themselves and choose to stand alone, having not the one

[1] 2 Timothy iii.

Spirit. Such men are there in the church and family of God.

I say, even in the apostolic days the church had got into this state; and St. Paul says it will grow worse. And it did so. Clement of Rome writes an epistle to the Corinthians, from which we can gather how they had neglected St. Paul's instructions, and how sad were the fruits of their neglect. That wherein they had excelled had been a snare to them. There were debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults. As a father speaking to his children, Clement recalls them to the simplicity of obedience, and would have them walk in love. He does not say that they are not the children of God, but he says this is most evil behaviour in His children. Subsequent church history is too well and too painfully known to require any mention at this time.

But look around you; what worshipping of men's talents; what following after leaders, because of some personal advantage possessed by them; what oppression of one man's mind by another man's mind; what schemes and inventions of men have come in upon the Church of God! what wilfulness, what independence, what mutual accusations! Men rule, who do not so by any grace, call, or institution of God. They rule not in the faith of a divine commission, or of a divine presence. Their jurisdiction undetermined, their limits fixed by their own personal inclination and power, and the facility of other men. They

reach where they *would* reach. They go where they *find* an open door, or where they can *make* an open door. The proud men, puffed up in their own abilities and great powers—puffed up by men's adulation, and by the ephemeral position into which the gale of popular estimation has called them, they bring their brethren into bondage; they bring Christ's freemen, whom the Son of God made free by His death, into bondage to themselves; teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. They vouch for their own views that they are God's views, and for their inventions, that they are God's ordinances. They thrust upon God's children *their* traditions; they thrust upon them their dicta, which have not attained to the respectability of traditions: and they will separate, and exclude, and excommunicate, and deliver over to the outer darkness, those who will not set to their seal, that *they* are true. So men rule. And men obey, without any faith that they are obeying God in doing so. They obey so long as they choose. They count themselves equally free to disobey. Moreover, they hate one another; they despise one another; they speak evil of one another; they break to pieces those who will not say what they say, and who will not change when they change. The shewing forth of God by a body is forgotten. The church is held to be a mere congeries of individuals. Some include in this congeries a larger number of individuals, some a smaller. Men select according to their taste. They judge one another. They

set aside one another. Anciently, a council of the whole Christian church was needed to judge finally any man. At least a competent church assembly was necessary for excluding any, even a private person, from the communion of the faithful.[1] At present it is a much easier matter. It is a daily matter. Private men and women, zealots scarcely arrived at the age of maturity necessary for human worldly affairs, determine it without hesitation. They tell us who are Christians, and who are not. Timothy, with much long-suffering and doctrine, was to bring the erring children of God to repentance. Now, we are spared that difficult duty. "They are not the children of God; they are heathen men and publicans. Let us separate ourselves." And in consequence, how many fall, never to rise again; for there is no one that will lift them up! They are forsaken of the brethren. How many weak brethren perish, for whom Christ died, because no one will for their sakes imitate Christ, and sacrifice his own will. Every one passes by on the other side. How many sheep are scattered and lost, because proud men say "they are not of the fold!" Thou proud man, lord over God's heritage, who hast permitted Christ's disciples to call thee master on earth, thou sayest, they are not Christ's sheep. Thou goest not after them as a shepherd. They hear not the voice of the Lamb. The voice of anger scares them—chases them away,—the voice of law and commandment. They

[1] 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.

must take for doctrine the commandments of men. They ask pitifully for bread, and thou givest them a stone, rebuke for healing. They are driven away, and many of them are lost. But their souls shall be required at thy hand, thou proud *master*. He that ruleth over men should be just, ruling in the fear of God. But with force and with cruelty hast thou ruled over them, and they are scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

And as the masters have taught, so have the people learned. Christ's sheep are not treated as Christ's sheep. The name of God is not read by men where God has written it. The name of God is not recognized by Christian men where God has put it. Where a conceited man judges that there is evidence enough of any one being a child of God, there the conceited, puffed-up man recognizes, puts, the name of God: otherwise he sees it *not*. Friend sees not that name in his friend. The husband sees it not in the wife. Nay, still worse, the parent sees it not in the child, and the child is not unfrequently taught to see that the name of God is not in the parent. Christianity, which properly is the cement of human society, has become a canker in the midst of it. Your children, your very children whom you have brought to the font of baptism, on whom that name of God has been pronounced in the house of God, and whom St. Paul declares to be holy even *before* their baptism—concerning whom a greater than St. Paul declared, that

of such is the kingdom of heaven—are not they looked upon as being yet strangers to the covenant, not of the family of God? They grow up as aliens, strangers and foreigners—as if they were without God, and without hope. They are educated to be enquirers, doubters, and then expected to become believers. They are taught to look upon the divine mercies of redemption and sonship as something without them, beyond them, to be sought after and attained, instead of something already within them, bestowed upon them, possessed by them, to be embraced by them as their possession. They are taught to seek His grace instead of admonished not to lose it. They are to seek His grace dubiously, difficultly, uncertainly, amid discouragements and conflicts, with suspicions of God, instead of that confidence in Him which befits a child, which is natural to a child. They are treated as little heathens first, that their Christianity may be a choice of their own. They are to choose for themselves. As if you parents had not chosen for them; as if you had no sacred responsibility to choose for them. Were you then afraid that you had yourselves made a wrong choice, or that it had been chosen wrongly for you: and were you therefore unwilling to commit them to the same? Do you shrink from the meaning of your own act, in bringing them to be baptized? Is the way of indecision, of doubt, mistrust of God, and scepticism, the way in which you should train them, that they may

go in it, and that, by the blessing of God, they may when they are old depart therefrom? And shall those whom you of your own will were the instruments of bringing into a world of sorrow, under the bondage of corruption, shall they not ask you one day, "why did you not put us into the same ark of safety with yourselves?" And why was your child's life intertwined with yours, by an eternal ordinance of God, so that he unavoidably, unescapeably inherited your mortal sinful nature, and shared your whole temporal condition, with all your obligations, moral and national, your worse or better fortunes, if it were not that he might also share in your new nature as members of Christ; in your whole spiritual condition, and spiritual obligations, and eternal good fortune, as the child of God? When did God ever enrich any man with a blessing, or make a covenant with him, that it was not intended, as a matter of course, that that man's house should share in it?

And if a man do not possess faith and spiritual understanding enough to call his own baptized children the children of God, how is it to be expected that he shall call any one else by that name? Perhaps he shrinks from calling *himself* a son of God. Here is the disjointing then of the body of Christ. The last, the extremest stage of it. Bone is separated from bone. The very ligatures of nature are unperceived, as *they* are used of God in

the body of His Son. Christian love is absent, even where natural love had provided a security for its cultivation. How much more must it be lost, where it possesses no such natural advantage?

And here we are this day, seeing, not in vision, as Ezekiel did, but in sad reality opening our eyes upon the Church of Christ. We pass by round about, we go from one part of it to another, from one region of the Christian earth to another, and we behold baptized men, very many, a great multitude which no man can number, but unable to regard themselves as members one of another. They are all set to live their spiritual life for themselves,—united to Christ, yet disunited from one another—saving each man his own soul, if he can, with such morsel of divine grace as an individual man can give room for. They are here and there in groups, gathered, not by divine organization, but by accident, by outward constraints, human tyrannies, temporary leaderships, calling themselves after the names of men, or after the names of God's ordinances converted into idols. Every gathering is a scattering. There is a refusing of some, wherever there is an accepting of some. Where there is a communion, it is by the refusal of another communion, or by the deserting of it. The men are living, but the bones are dead: as to themselves, living; as to the body, dead. The Spirit of God cannot act, or manifest Himself in

a disorganized body. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ, in His body. But He is not the spirit of a group of the followers of a man. He is not the spirit of a group who are idolizing baptism; or of a group who are idolizing the ordinance of bishop; or of a group who are idolizing priestly vestments, altar cloths, or church furniture; or of a group who will permit the king to set aside the Lord; or of a group who will give judgment into the hands of the people. He is not the Spirit of any of them. Therefore the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of life, appears not in any of them. He is offended, grieved, vexed, quenched in them all. The groups are groups of *dry* bones.

The bones of the vision were the house of Israel. God disowned them not. And Christians are the members of Christ. God disowns not *them.* His Spirit has not withdrawn Himself. The dry bones can live. They can, if they come bone to his bone; if they yield to the divine organization, to the order and arrangement of God. When the Lord spake, when the Lord spake by a man, bone came to his bone. When Elias shall come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and of the children to the fathers. The members shall fit to one another, every one in his place in the body. There shall be one great living thing—containing one life, the Holy Ghost—every part alive by the *one* life of the one

thing. And that one thing shall be the instrument of God—the army of God—a host for the Lord of hosts, and the glory of God shall appear therein. The Lord shall suddenly come to His temple. The Head shall be manifested when the body is gathered, and when the oneness is seen.

Say not, "our hope is lost—unity is irrecoverable."

God has not forgotten to be gracious. Only leave off this exclusive regard for your private personal interests. Cast in your lot with your brethren in all the earth. Desire spiritual prosperity for yourselves, through their spiritual prosperity. Repent of the selfishness of past times. Repent of the divisions that are among you. Learn that you are all one, and learn to be all one family again, and desire to see one table again in your common Father's house. Eat not every one his own supper, for that is not to eat the Lord's Supper. Let not the bread which you break be the bread of a party, leavened with exclusion and excommunication. Let not the cup of blessing, which is blessed among you, be a cup of cursing.

Oh! it is now for a long time that God has been dishonoured by those who are called by His name! It is now for a long time that the bones have been thus scattered and dried! His name has been blasphemed. We have wrought no salvation on the earth. You say that you are very zealous for the Lord of

hosts. Be it so. Do then display that zeal by something better than trying to gather all souls to your leaders, and to your idols, and to put all the earth under the feet of your party. So long as you spend your labours in that way, you shew that you and your leaders are in need of learning over again what be the first principles of the oracles of God. You grieve over the sad estate of God's heritage. Grieve far more, and keep a fast in your hearts before the Lord. But fast not for strife and debate, and cease to smite with the fist of wickedness. He that hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life in him. True grief does not dwell where the bowels of compassion do not yearn over all the children, good and bad, obedient and disobedient, healthy and diseased, prodigal and prudent alike.

Only let the word of promise have free course over the whole church. Desire that it may. Pray that it may speedily, that it may *now* be spoken to the whole of Christendom. The word of promise and of hope,—from God—spoken by men—promise of reappearing unity —hope of reappearing unity and life. And under that word, by no devices of men, by no efforts of men, such as in past days have but added to the confusions and divisions of God's children—but by the power of that word of God: I say, under that word, bone shall come to his bone, Christian man to Christian

man; the flocks shall return to the pastors, and the pastors to the flocks. The wisdom of the just shall enter again into the children of disobedience. The living temple shall again be built, and the Holy Ghost shall be seen that He is there. Then shall all flesh be silent, and it shall be known that the Lord hath spoken it, and hath performed it.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON X.

MEN ARE INSENSIBLY JUDGED BY EVENTS.

MATTHEW xiii. 10-12.

"And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

And, Matthew xxv. 27-29.—"Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

THESE passages of our blessed Lord's discourse present to us one of the principles of the divine righteousness. There is in His language an apparent paradox. We can understand how that which a man hath can be taken from him: but we cannot understand how that which a man hath not, can be taken from him. There must certainly be two sorts of having to which allusion is made. —The paradox may perhaps explain itself as we proceed.

It was said of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Simeon concerning our blessed Lord, on His presentation in the temple, "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." He was so, because He came from God, and because God was with Him. He was so, because in everything He was God's servant, and man's servant in nothing—I mean, servant of man's will—for He was indeed servant for man, and for man's necessities. He was so, because He regarded in every thing God's will, and not man's will—not His own, not any other man's. Because His words were God's words, and His acts were God's acts; because He delighted in the will of His Father, and His law was in His heart. This was the thing which made Jesus different as a man from other men. And all men felt the difference: and that difference proved all men with whom He came in contact; proved them, whether they would or not, whether they perceived it or not; and revealed the thoughts of many hearts.

Indeed, there never had been a generation of men so tried as that generation was to which our Lord came. God had become manifest in the flesh. The Word had been made flesh, and was dwelling among men. Such a thing had never been before. The truth was personally in the midst of men. Men knew not how to meet such a man as He was. They had acquired a manner and form for acting and speaking decently to all

other men. They had learned how to hide their thoughts from men. Their intercourse with men could be conducted without any being made to fall thereby—without the thoughts of any hearts being revealed. But here was a person, from whom their forms, and conventionalities, and hypocrisies, did not protect them. It was not merely that He could tell their thoughts by supernatural discernment. No; but in His presence, under His words, they could not but speak so as to disclose their thoughts; and their way of thinking could not but act so as to disclose their characters, and their principles of action. In meeting Him, in hearing Him speak, they could not but show themselves—could not but discover whether they knew God, or were ignorant of Him; whether they believed in Him, or were unbelievers; whether they loved God, or hated Him.

Now our blessed Lord came for the purpose of giving. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He came to give. His will was to give. But there were only some to whom He *could* give. And when men stood before Him, the diverse manners in which they behaved under His presence and His speech and His actings disclosed whether it was possible to give to them or not. He did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. And yet for judgment He *had* come into the world, that those who saw not might see, and that those who saw might be made blind. This was an involuntary, unavoidable judgment. The light could

not help manifesting the darkness. Men loved darkness rather than the light. They did so, because their deeds were evil. And they could not conceal their own choice and preference: they judged themselves by not coming to the light when they saw it. If they had been humble men, penitent men, men trusting in God, believing that He was what He had declared Himself to be, "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin," they would have come to the light; either because they already walked in light, and already their deeds were wrought in God, or else because they were willing to have their deeds reproved, because they had such trust in God, and assurance of His love, that they could bear to have their deeds reproved. Jesus Himself walked in the light, came to the light, always was in the light, and never in the darkness, for all His deeds were wrought in God. And, therefore, wheresoever He went, He proved men, He tried whether they were willing to have their deeds reproved or not; whether they were hypocrites, or penitents. And so He was a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and many among them stumbled and fell, and were broken, and snared, and taken. I say, therefore, there never had been a generation on the earth, so tried, as that generation was. And it was impossible to endure the trial. For three years and a half He was endured, but with ever-increasing pain, indignation, hatred; and beyond that short time the

world could bear it no longer, and they demanded His death, and they obtained it.

We find our blessed Lord frequently reasoning with the Jews about their manner of receiving Him and His words. He says—"Why do ye not understand My speech? Because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not. He that is of God, heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." Ye ought to have been of God. But ye are not. "If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from God: neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me." Ye should have loved Me. Ye say, We have one Father, even God. So ye say. And ye should have been of God. It was God's intention that ye should be of Him. He had taken means enough to make you His—a people for His name. But ye love Me not. Ye are not of Him. Those means have failed. Ye *have* these means; yet ye have them not. I came to give; but I cannot give to you, for having ye have not.

On another occasion, He reasoned in like manner. My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me; if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself. "Did not Moses give you the law? And yet none of you keepeth the law." How can God give unto *you* to know that My doctrine is from Him? You say that Moses'

doctrine was from Him. You are sure of that. You are zealous for that. You are so zealous for that, that you go about to kill Me for healing a man on the Sabbath day. Moses gave you that law. God gave you that law by the hand of Moses. Yet none of you keepeth that law. None of you doeth the will of God expressed in that law. How then *can* God give to *you* an understanding of My doctrine. That which ye have, ye have not —how then can more be given unto you?

And again He explains to them the reason of their unbelief thus: "Ye have not His word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not. And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life. I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. Do not think that *I* will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust; for had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me; but if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe My words?" Had ye believed Moses whom ye have; had ye believed those scriptures in which ye think ye have eternal life, then the love of God would have been in you. But ye see Me and love Me not. Ye hear Me: and ye thereupon hate Me, and take counsel to put Me to death. Ye are proved, and judged, that ye have not that which ye say ye have. The tables have the law, for it is written on them; but you have it not, for it is not written in your hearts. You have trusted Moses, but

it was intended that you should trust God. Then you would have known when God sent the prophet like unto Moses. If you had tasted of the truth, you would have recognized it again. If you had loved God, you would have responded to every word and every acting of His love. Ye have not His word abiding in you, otherwise His word would have found an echo in your hearts. I accuse you not. Moses accuses you. *He* accuses you. He says, you have not believed Moses. You are discovered to be unbelievers in Moses, and that is your condemnation. For had ye believed Moses, ye should have believed Me. If you had *had* Moses, Christ should have been *given* you."

Most true it is then which is said by St. Paul, that "as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." For,[1] "behold thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law. . . . . Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." They boast

[1] Rom. ii. 17-20, 23, 24.

that they have the law, but they show that they have it not. Nay, the more they had it and handled it, the less they had it. For when John came and preached and baptized, the common people and the publicans justified God, and were baptized of John; but the Pharisees and the lawyers, who had the law, who interpreted the law, who dispensed it, who boasted of it—they frustrated the counsel of God to their own hurt; frustrated the law itself, as well as the mission of John, refusing to be baptized of him. They had not received wisdom by the law. They had not been made the children of wisdom by the law. They were still fools, and blind, and when wisdom spake, they discerned it not, they justified it not. Wisdom could take no true form that would please them. They found fault with it, for the most opposite and self-contradictory reasons. John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, he hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. When Jesus spake, they discerned not the voice of wisdom; when He acted, they discerned not the finger of God, but said, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." So little had the law done for them. They had the law, and yet the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them. They had the law, yet they had it not. They were in a condition, which made it impossible to

give to them, and which placed them in hazard of losing that which they had.

Elsewhere St. Paul says, "We commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God; but if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The gospel is hid to those whose minds are blinded by the god of this world. And the god of this world blinds the minds of those who believe not. The apostle cannot commend himself to *their* consciences. This does not mean those who believe not the gospel. But it means those who believe not that which they already had by revelation of God. They held in unrighteousness that truth which they had. Their consciences were in such a condition that he could not commend himself to them. They had light, but they loved darkness better, and they received the darkness which they loved; the god of this world blinded their minds. They had—yet had not—and nothing could be given to them.

There is one other form in which this principle of the divine acting towards men is brought before us in the Scripture. It is written,[1] "Though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of

[1] John xii.

Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake—Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." And the same fact is contained in the following:[1] "We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest. . . . . And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." And again,[2] when the word of that salvation was,

[1] Acts xxviii. 22, &c. [2] Acts xiii. 26, 27.

after the resurrection of our Lord, sent first to the children of the stock of Abraham, Paul said, "They that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him." Now, consider what was the fact? The kingdom of God was expounded and testified to those to whom Moses had spoken, and who had also the prophets. But it became apparent that they did not believe Moses and the prophets. They had Moses and the prophets, but had them not. They heard them, but heard them not. They had closed their eyes to Moses and the prophets; they had made their ears heavy, and their hearts gross to the revelation which they possessed. And therefore, God made their ears heavy to the new revelation. They *would* not see Him in the former revelation, and therefore He *suffered* them not to see Him in the new revelation. He gave them not anything. He could not give them anything. Rather He must take from them that which they had. The rich man, lifting up his eyes in hell, besought Abraham that a messenger from the dead might go to his brethren, lest they also should come into that place of torment. But Abraham said, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. But the rich man, not understanding God's ways, God's righteous ways, still urged his plea. And at last Abraham said, If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rose from the dead. If they have not that which

they have, how can anything more be given them? And yet, God was more liberal than Abraham's words gave expectation of. For another Lazarus *was* raised from the dead. And what did they then? Immediately thereupon, they took final counsel concerning Jesus. He must now no longer be trifled with. Then, Caiaphas stood up and *prophesied* that it was expedient for them that one man should die. The death of Jesus from that day forward was a determined thing; and the chief priests consulted together how they might put Him also to death who had been sent to them from the dead. So truly had Abraham judged.

No wonder, then, that our Lord said, "Take heed how ye hear." For if ye hear with ears shut to Moses whom ye have, ye cannot hear the prophet like unto Moses. The more ye hear it shall only prove the more ruinous for you. If ye hear not Moses as hearing God, ye cannot hear another who speaks from God. If ye hear Moses only as the head and founder of your human party, you cannot hear Him who speaks from God. It cannot be given you. God gives faith where He *can* give it. Hath not Solomon long ago told you—"The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them." And did not the scriptures which ye venerate, close with the very words, "Remember ye the law of Moses *My servant* which *I* commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments," and with a promise of Elijah the prophet, whose office should be to bring the children back to the

fathers, and to make you a generation believing not only in Moses My servant, but in Me who spake by him, and therefore able to believe in Me, when I should speak not by Moses, but by Myself.

Thus far we have spoken of those who *had* Moses and the prophets. But what shall we say of the Gentiles. They had not the law. Yet they had their natural senses and faculties, and the light of nature, reason, and conscience, discerning to a certain degree good and evil, truth and falsehood; and they had more or less of the traditions of original revelation. They had guides, rulers, and governors. They had the goods and possessions of this world. They had these—and if they had them truly, somewhat more should be given them. Do they obey the light of nature, or violate it? Light shall accordingly be given them or refused to them. Do they turn their senses and their faculties to good, or to evil? Do they follow reason and conscience, or resist them? Accordingly, shall divine truth be added thereto, or reason shall be stupified, and conscience blinded. Do they obey their rulers, and follow their guides: or resist them, refuse them, and rebel against them? Accordingly, shall the Prince and Saviour be given to them, whom God has to reveal. How do they employ their riches and possessions in this world? In riot, or in moderation? Do they bestow all on luxury and self-indulgence; or do they feed the hungry, and

clothe the naked, and care for the sick, and use their possessions as having them from God? Accordingly shall the better riches be given them or not. The principle is the same. Only to whom little is given, of him the less is required in that day when it must be determined whether he have it or have it not.

What, then, is the history of the progress of the gospel? Long before the gospel came, God had by the prophet, enquired thus: "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts." None other could bear the manner of His teaching, by a little at a time, and a little more to such as had received and held in the fear of God that first little. Our Lord had taught His disciples, by setting a little child in the midst of them, in what sort of temper of heart and condition of mind they must always hold themselves, that they might be able to go forward with Him. And He had foretold how it should fare in the world with His word. Some seed fell on the trodden pathway, where the feet of men had made all hard and impenetrable: the customs, the phrases, the hypocrisies of human society, had made everything formal, hard, and impenetrable, where nothing was held for God, and where nothing *could* be held for God. And some fell among stones, where the heart was only half for God: and where nothing could be desired, or given up, or endured

out of love for Him. And some among thorns, where the attention was all engaged, and the interests all pre-occupied, and where nothing could come to perfection. And some fell on the good ground of an honest heart—an honest heart that meant what it said: not dulled by hypocrisy to the perception of truth; not substituting phrases for things: seeing what it saw, hearing what it heard, justifying wisdom wherever wisdom spake. And as the parable had foretold, so it proved. For who heard and received the gospel? Not the hypocrites and pretenders; not the self-conceited dogmatisers; not those who sought praise of men. Not one of them. Not the proud, who said, "We see, we have." No, but the meek; those who had endured the preaching of Him who came in the spirit and power of Elias; those who were smiting on their breasts, and saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. Those who were Israelites indeed, without guile. Those who sought praise of God. Those who walked in all the precepts and ordinances blameless, and who waited for the consolation of Israel. To them it was given to receive the gospel. And to whom did it go among the Gentiles? To the Ethiopian, who had been so far as Jerusalem that he might worship; and was so earnest, that, as he journeyed, he was reading the word of God, and so meek that he was willing to be taught by any one who could teach. To Cornelius, a devout man, one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

To Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, who desired to hear the word of God. To Lydia, a woman who worshipped God, and whose worship God acknowledged, by opening her heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul; a woman whom they found by the river side, where prayer was wont to be made. To such as these, first of all, the gospel was imparted, and in *their* hearts it found a resting-place. And to all others whom God prepared with meekness and simplicity, with penitence and self-abasement, to receive it. To those who had, was given. And where the new thing had begun and was planted on the earth, there, from those who had not, was taken away even that which they had. Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed. The gods of the heathen and their oracles were silenced. Those who, having Moses, received not Christ, lost Moses also. Those who, having reason, used it not, were made brutish. Those who obeyed not even nature, were left to become unnatural.

It is, then, a principle of the ways of God with men, that He meets every individual according to the character which he has. As God finds him conducting himself in his actual relations and circumstances, accordingly God acts towards him. He meets with a gift those who, having nothing, acknowledge that they have nothing. He meets with a gift those who, having something, are desiring to keep it, and to use it, and to put it out to usury, as His, and not their own. Those who, having talents, are glorifying themselves or

courting the praise of men through them—He gives not His wisdom to them. He makes foolish their wisdom. And so on. As it is written in the Psalms, "With the merciful, Thou wilt shew Thyself merciful; with an upright man, Thou wilt shew Thyself upright; with the pure, Thou wilt shew Thyself pure; and with the froward, Thou wilt shew Thyself froward. For Thou wilt save the afflicted people, but Thou wilt bring down high looks." As it is also said by the prophet, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways." "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away." If a man regard God in that thing which he has received from God, he thereby shews an ability to perceive God in higher and better things. And so there is a continual, insensible, unavoidable judgment of every individual man going forward. For if he be rejoicing in that which God hath done or given, then he rejoices in all God's continual progress; and if he be discontented with God's past doings, and gifts, or unsubmissive to God's past doings, or to His will, then he rejoices *not* in God as He goes on to act. The instinctive joy, the instinctive absence of joy, these betray each man; they judge each man.

Now, the next great acting of God toward men we know from Holy Scripture shall be the sending again of Jesus Christ from His right hand, with power and great glory. And His present

daily acting toward His Church is the preparation of His children for the coming and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is coming to us at present, much as He came to the Jews by John the Baptist. The spirit of Elias is upon many preachers and clergy up and down Christendom. They are calling the children to their fathers, and the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and preparing a highway for our God. In these very days God is calling to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. In these very days He is saying, Let My saints be gathered together unto Me; those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice; for the judgment is at hand, and God is judge Himself. And again it shall be, To him that hath shall be given.

Are you prepared for that trial? What then have you?

You have the scriptures. You have the sacraments. You have pastors, spiritual guides, spiritual rulers. Or, if through ignorance and want of instruction you *have* not these, you have at least parents; you have natural faculties; you have somewhat of the substance and goods of this present life. These things ye have. God has given you them. Shall then more be given you? Can more be given you? That is the question now. Jesus is coming again. He is coming to those who use these things, and who look for Him. He is coming to give them

salvation—enlargement. He is coming to reign, and to manifest them as God's children, and to make them reign with Him. He is about to give them authority in His kingdom. Whatever is meant by the authority over ten cities and over five cities in the parable, the time for conferring it is at hand, and the trial of who shall receive it must speedily take place. He gave to every one a talent, to every one according to his several ability; and according to his use thereof shall be the issue which now in these days hasteth to meet every one of us.

Well then, you have the scriptures, and they are the word of God. Have you then God's word abiding in you? Have you learned to know God from His word? Do you know that He is not an austere man? Or do you think that He reaps where He sows not, and gathers where He has not strawed? Has His word been a light to your feet, and a lamp to your path; or have you used it principally as a storehouse of weapons for your controversies and quarrels? Has it been your meditation all the day, or put aside as the inconvenient, troublesome reprover of your selfish, unruly, godless ways? Are you now, by your intimacy with His written word, prepared to recognise His word in all who speak it, or who speak according to it; prepared to recognise the unity of His actings, past, present, and about to come; prepared to meet Him in all His approaching acts, because you have learnt from all His past acts to love Him, and to trust in Him as good?

And you have the commandments and the creed. Have you then the knowledge of the will of God? And knowing His will, are you doing it? Having the truth, do you love it, and accommodate your thoughts and words to it; or do you deal hypocritically with it, and, for the present, walk by the world's maxims, and according to the convenience of the time; taking your pleasure for a little in the world, and desiring the approbation and good opinion of men, for the present? If you love the truth, you shall grow in truth; God shall become light to you more and more; you shall be changed from glory to glory. But if you love not the truth, it will do nothing for you. The truth, apart from God, is nothing. Do you not know that the worst enemies of God are those who turn His very gifts against Him? It is they who have received the truth, but not been saved by it because they loved it not; it is they on whom comes a strong delusion to believe a lie. Antichrist springs up from among those to whom God has given His truth. Antichrist's followers are those who have had the gospel, and who have not been made righteous by the gospel.

You have the sacraments. You have been baptized. You have been made members of Christ, and have obtained the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Has then your heart loved Him who hath so graciously forgiven all your sins, and washed you with the blood of His own Son? Have you yielded to the Holy Ghost? Have you treated yourselves as God's children?

Have you loved God's family, and delighted to be in it; and used that table which He had prepared for you, and eaten of that spiritual meat, and drunk of that spiritual cup? Or are you choosing to let these precious gifts of God go to waste, to neglect them, to despise them, perhaps to sell your very birthright? Will you choose to live as the children of the wicked one? Will you make yourselves strangers and aliens, and feel as if God was unfriendly? Having been brought unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the New Jerusalem, will you live unto the flesh, and walk as the Gentiles who know not God? You have these gifts, and God is in them; and if you have found God in them, you shall be able to find Him in other further things; but if not, even these shall be taken away. According to your faith it shall be unto you. If any judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, they shall not have eternal life. If you have fallen asleep to your privileges, and neglected your talent, and become dubious reasoners about God and His gospel, of course the day that burneth as an oven must come upon you as a thief in the night. And how shall it find you? You whom God had reconciled, that day shall find enemies of God. You whom God had made brothers and members one of another, that day shall find hating and devouring one another. You whom God had made branches of the vine, that day shall find withered branches, that can only be cut off and cast into the fire. You whom God had made children of the kingdom

that day shall find become children of the wicked one. You to whom God had given the Holy Ghost, that day shall find filled with devils.

You have pastors, spiritual guides, spiritual rulers. Well then, do you obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves? Do you know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and do you esteem them very highly for their work's sake? Do you consider yourselves to be their joy and crown? Do you receive instruction from those whom you call your instructors? Do you bear the rebuke of those whom you call your rulers? Do you follow those whom you call your guides? Do you hear and discern God's voice in their instructions, admonitions, exhortations? Remember—his servants ye are to whom ye obey. Your rulers are no rulers if you do not yield them obedience. They help you not if you do not obey them. Those whom you do obey and follow, they are your rulers and guides. The others are rulers theoretically, or what men call constitutionally. But the men whom you actually obey are the practical rulers; often unconstitutional enough. Your practical rulers are the leaders of your parties. Not bishops, not pastors, but accidental men—the men of the day. You follow *them*. That is *not* obeying them that have the rule over you. Do you, I say, obey them that have the rule over you, *because* they have the rule over you, and do you therefore discern and hear God's voice when they speak to you? If you do, you

shall hear and discern God's voice, when, where, and howsoever He shall speak to you. But if you count them not for ministers of God, but take them only for their human worth, as clever men, or pious men, or men with a name, or men whom the multitude is running after; in that case ye shall not hear and discern God's voice either in them or in any one else. Some are proud that they have bishops, and a true primitive church constitution, and an effectual ordination. Some are proud that they have pastors according to God's heart, chosen as they ought to be, called as they ought to be. Very good. But the question, the judging question is, Do you use them? Do you heed them, and observe and do that which they say to you? You will not be saved merely because you *have* these things. Your bishops would willingly save you; but they cannot do anything for those who rebel against their authority. Your pastors would save you: they labour as those who must give an account, and answer for your souls; but they can do nothing for those who submit not to them, and who do not lay to heart earnestly their faithful warnings. The good order and primitive constitution of which you boast, shall it save you? You boast of it. Well, then, has it made the wolf to lie down with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid, or do they still hurt and destroy in your holy mountain? Shall that of which you boast save you? Nothing but the knowledge of God Himself revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ shall save you. All these things have increased your

responsibility—they have increased the means of trying you, whether you have found God or not, or rather whether ye have loved Him and sought Him or not. That is all.

You have the natural ordinances and the relationships of life. Parents, masters, magistrates, kings. Well then, have you honoured your father and mother? if you have, something more can be given you. Have you counted them that are your masters worthy of all honour, and done their will faithfully, conscientiously, and not as a matter of appearance? then you are in a position where God will meet you with gifts. Have you obeyed magistrates, and been subject to them, not for fear only, but for conscience sake? Are you loyal to the king, as an ordinance of God? Then God can find you, to bestow upon you whenever He comes forth to bestow. But children who disregard their parents, and servants who are not subject to their masters, and subjects who are disloyal to their sovereign: they possess these good things only for their own greater judgment. And are there not many such self-deceivers at home not reverencing the hoary head, impatient, unkind to their parents, resisting, despising their parents, yet prominent in the church, and loud on the platform? Are there not many such self-deceivers, supposing that they fear God, while they honour not the king? Self-deceivers, zealous about all religious abstractions: but in the way of real, present, immediate relationships and duties, they walk not. They are not found in the ways in

which God walks, and He cannot meet them. The rebellious shall dwell in a parched land. Their fruitful field is turned into a desert. All those who are proud instead of meek, opinionative instead of docile, heady and high-minded instead of working out their salvation with fear and trembling, dictating to others instead of learning themselves, speaking evil of dignities instead of honouring God who has ordained dignities: all these, all such, the wicked one, when he is revealed, shall possess. They shall say of him, "this is God." When he shall sit in the temple of God, and shew himself for God, they shall say, "he is God," and they shall worship him as God. For he is king over all the children of pride. God can give them nothing, and that which they had He must take away from them.

And you have your natural faculties, your worldly condition—wealth, perhaps, and worldly substance, more or less. Well, then, have you used your reason, and discerned good and evil without perverseness, and listened to the voice of conscience; and have you employed your senses for pure purposes, and exercised them on objects which your heart approved? Or have you consecrated them to vain things, and sought nothing higher in them than your own pleasure, or the praise and good opinion of a few men in the brief generation in which you live? These are your talents. Where is God's usury from them? What shall He give you when He appears? And have you fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, out

of your worldly substance? Have you pled the cause of the widow with your influence, and judged the fatherless? Then, it *is* possible for some higher gift to be given you. If not, if you have been unfaithful in the righteous mammon, who will give unto you the true riches?

Your trial is at hand. The Lord when He came first, judged His people. They could not avoid it. They could not hide themselves from that event which tried them. They could not keep themselves indifferent to it. And when He comes now, the second time, He will again judge His people, *us*, all of *us*, all Christians. Appearances will not then avail. Zeal will not then deceive. Masks and hypocrisies will serve no one. Words how good soever will not put off Him. You—you men and women, shall then unconsciously speak that which shall disclose your state. Either, "thy pound hath gained ten pounds," or, "I knew thee that thou wast an austere man." Jesus has been near to you often and often, when you knew it not, and He knows how you treated Him, how you received Him: you know not—and ye shall say "when saw we Thee?" But He shall answer "for as much as ye did it not unto the least of these My brethren, ye did it not unto Me." Easily, naturally, silently, unescapeably, shall we all be judged, shall we all proclaim ourselves that which we are. [1]The day that cometh shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble;

[1] Mal. iv. 1-3.

and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. Unto them that fear His name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings: they shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. They shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of their feet in the day that God shall do that. He that hath a blessing in his heart, shall utter his blessing and his thanksgiving, and the health of the Sun of righteousness shall shine upon him; and he that hath a curse in his heart in that day, shall utter his curse, and be turned into ashes.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON XI.

THE DAY OF VENGEANCE IS THE DAY OF SALVATION.

ISAIAH lxi. 1-3.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."

See LUKE iv. 16-19.

WHEN Joseph and Mary the mother of our Lord returned out of Egypt, bringing their child with them, they went to Nazareth, and lived there among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And there, among the children of that place, going out and in after His parents, Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. He was known there as the son of Joseph the carpenter's son, whose brothers and sisters they all knew. He was beloved of them all, commended of them all. Visibly to them all, the grace

of God was upon Him. He grew up among their children; He was the companion of their children; He differed from their children in nothing but this, that no one could find any fault in Him; that, loving and beloved, He had praise of all. To His parents, and those who could mark His sayings, His thoughts and ways, His life was not without promise of great things, indications of His being a Nazarite unto God. But from the multitude these tokens were prudently left hidden, and they knew Him only as He lived among them in meek subjection to His parents for thirty years; the man with "clean hands and a pure heart, who had not lifted up His soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

But, for a time He disappeared from among them. A preacher of repentance had risen up, and he was baptizing multitudes in Jordan: for Jerusalem and all Judea went out to him, and heard his preaching; and confessing their sins, they were baptized of him there. Thither went also Jesus, and when He was baptized, lo! the heavens were opened, and John saw the Spirit of God descending upon Him in a bodily shape, like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And lo! a voice from heaven, which said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." From this point, after this event, He is in a new condition. An office, a ministry has been given Him. He returns into Galilee. But He is mightily changed. He has returned in the power of the Spirit. He is no longer merely the obedient son, the meek

and good man. But He preaches in the synagogues, He works miracles, He heals the sick, He casts out devils. A fame of Him has gone abroad through all the region. The Nazarenes hear of it. They wonder and say: What is this that hath befallen our fellow-citizen and our kinsman: does this meek man take to *himself* a ministry, and make *himself* a prophet? We would know how this is.

And Jesus did at length come back to Nazareth. And as His custom *now* was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read. The ruler of the synagogue gave Him the book of the prophet Esaias, and when He opened the book, He found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Thus far He read, and then closed the book, and returned it to the minister: and sitting down, the eyes of all in the synagogue being fastened on Him, He began to speak, saying, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

This is the reason of the change that has come upon Him. He has been anointed to preach the gospel. He is born the Son of God; but He is not born the minister of God—He receives an

anointing. He takes not to Himself the honour of being a minister or a prophet. "The Lord hath sent Me." He receives a mission,—He is God, and yet He receives a mission. He had waited for a mission; and only when He receives the mission, does He proceed to execute a ministry. They had all borne witness before, to His being filled with wisdom, to the grace of God being with Him. By that grace of God, by that measure of the grace of God, He had lived among them a holy man. But now He has been anointed to preach: the grace of God is with Him after another measure. The Holy Ghost has descended upon Him at His baptism. He has come up in the power of the Spirit. And they listened to Him for a time, and "bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth."

They wondered at the gracious words. For He did preach good tidings to the meek, to the poor; that if there were any meek and poor among them, any who needed and could appreciate a gospel, they might hear and be comforted. He offered to bind up the broken-hearted; He told them how God had pitied them; that if there were any contrite and broken-hearted there, they might come and cleave unto and follow Him, till their hearts were revived and healed again. He proclaimed deliverance to the captives; He blew the trumpet of Jubilee; that if any were conscious of bondage or weary of captivity, they might take heart, and receive power to escape. He promised to set at liberty them that were bruised;

that if any were conscious of chains, and galled under a yoke, they might come to Him and be released from them.

He sits there among these men of Nazareth, and their eyes are all fastened upon Him. He knows them. He knows all these men personally, intimately. Their lives, their habits, their little histories are known to Him. He knows what bondage they are under; bondage to their own lusts and passions; bondage to falsehood and hypocrisy; bondage to the doctrines and commandments of men; bondage under the spiritual oppression of Satan; bondage through ignorance of God, and through fear of death. And He offers perfect deliverance to them all—He declares the acceptable year of the Lord. He says, "Now is the day of salvation."

And what is the effect of that preaching? They wonder at the gracious words: and they say, is not this Joseph's son? But they are not meek nor poor, and that gospel is not for them, does not light upon them, is not anything to them. They are whole-hearted; grief for their sins and their distance from God, and their opposition to God, has not broken their hearts, neither are they full of heaviness: they need not the Physician. They say, We are Abraham's children, and never were in bondage to any man. And they need not to be set free. If they are in chains, they are not galled by them, they are not bruised by them. The day of God's favour they

have already. They know of no favour that they require at His hand. They are content.

Thus it was with them; and so He obtained no hearing. He could not even do any miracles among them because of their unbelief. He could not confirm His claim to be a prophet, anointed of God. And He told them why. And the words became unbearable. How could they admit that *He* was a *prophet*, whom they had so long been familiar with as a *man?* He had always spoken the truth among them; but there are some truths which they cannot bear to hear; and now He speaks of these. There is something about His words now that used not to be; they seem to divide the joints and marrow. They had known Him: ay, they had *loved* Him; but now there is a power that goes with that same voice which they had known and loved to hear. At first they wonder at it; but as they sit and hearken, they find themselves trembling before Him. This is too much. They are all filled with wrath, and, as one man they rise up, and thrust Him out of the city, and lead Him to the brow of an hill to cast Him down.

Such was the effect of that first preaching of the gospel to the men who knew Him best. Rage, rage insatiable by anything short of the death of its object. And He went away to another city.

Well, I say—our blessed Lord read only thus far. But the prophecy contained something

more. Our Lord proclaimed the day of God's favour, the period for being admitted to His favour. But the prophecy goes on, and adds, "the day of vengeance of our God." The day of vengeance which had been spoken of by Moses and all the prophets. And at subsequent periods of His ministry, *He* also proclaimed *that.* He proclaimed it as a threatening, if possibly thereby to make some repent, and accept the favour of God. He pronounced woes over the cities where His mighty works had been done, and where men had not repented. Still more, He meditated of that day within His own breast, sorrowing and weeping as He beheld the city which God had chosen, that His name should be there, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." And He prophesies their destruction almost in the very language of Moses,[1] destruction that should come upon them, because they knew not the day of their visitation, the acceptable year of the Lord.

And now, certain years are past, and the gospel has gone over all the cities of Israel. And lo! all Israel is come together, and is in Jerusalem the holy city, for the worship of God, for the feast of the Passover. They have *all* heard the gracious words of this man, they have all seen His mighty works. He has spoken to them all which Jehovah's servant can speak, and He can say

[1] Deut. xxviii.

nothing more, there is nothing more that He can speak. God hath spoken to them by His Son. And they have wondered, and been moved; but they have not heard, nor obeyed. And they are all come together in obedience to the law. And He is there also. And their priests and rulers, whose lips should keep knowledge, and at whose mouth the people should seek the law, have taken counsel, and determined His death. Their priests, their rulers, who ought to have been the messengers of the Lord of hosts, and who had the key of knowledge, and who opened and shut the kingdom of heaven, they propose to them that this man is not fit to live. And they all assent to it. Assembled Israel—after having fully heard and known the Son of God—assembled Israel says, He is not fit to live, and as one man they rise up and demand that He should be crucified. And they overbear the Gentile governor, answering him and saying, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children;" and they execute their will; and that deed was done, which must ever stand alone and without parallel in the world's history.

That deed was done. But God did not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. He raised Him from the dead. And when He arose from the dead, the love that was in His heart still burned toward His people. And He gave commandment to His disciples to preach the gospel to them yet once more. Perchance they will believe in Him whom God hath raised from the dead. Perchance

they will believe the gospel when preached in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and confirmed by signs from heaven, in those who shall do greater things than Jesus Himself did in the days of His flesh. Such was His love. The day of vengeance was not in His heart, except to desire its postponement, and their repentance. It is still the year of acceptance, the day of salvation. He had no personal vengeance to seek. He had prayed for His enemies, and for those who put Him to death. He had forgiven them. He had sought for them God's forgiveness, and He had obtained it. He had obtained it by that very death which they had inflicted. And He now sends His apostles to preach it.

And in what terms do they preach it?[1] "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shown by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from

[1] Acts iii. 13-15, 17-21, 25, 26.

the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." In these terms they preach that forgiveness which Jesus had obtained. Ye have indeed with wicked hands crucified and slain the Holy and Just One, the Son of God. Yet ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers. All the kindreds of the earth should yet be blessed through you, the seed of Abraham; and unto you first, God, having raised up His Son Jesus, hath sent Him to bless you. Him whom you refused, God has accepted. Him whom you made a curse, God hath sent to bless you. Such gospel did He still send them. Ye are still acknowledged of God for His people, His people whom He has made for His praise. Doubt not of that. Let not Satan shake your faith that ye are His people. You have indeed spoken a word against the Son of man, and you have stained your hands with His blood. But from heaven, whither He has gone, He speaks to you; from heaven He calls you children of the covenant.

And He will turn every one of you from your iniquities. Let your faith return to that covenant, and commit yourselves to *His* hands, who is exalted of God a Prince and a Saviour, for to grant unto you repentance and remission of sins. Only "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. *For* the promise is unto you and to your children." Millions heard this, and some thousands believed it, and they were made members of the risen Christ, and the Holy Ghost came upon them.

But the people, the nation, those children of the covenant, could not bear it, or permit it to be spoken; and they put the apostles in prison, and commanded them to speak no more in His name.

They resisted the Holy Ghost. They forbade the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. And the wrath, and the day of vengeance was proclaimed to them. And the day of vengeance came upon them to the uttermost; even all that had been spoken by Moses and the prophets. And they are now scattered over the earth, crawling upon the face of it, hither and thither, as if they belonged not to it, in lean and haggard wretchedness, whom the rustling of a leaf causes to tremble; scraping together some perishable wealth which they cannot enjoy; men having no hope but only in *this* life, yea rather, men having no hope either in this life, or in that which is to come. The blood which their fathers shed lies heavily upon

them. The Spirit which their fathers rejected is far from them. They lie under a great sin, without the consolation even of repentance; under a grievous misery, and their hearts too hard to yield them even the comfort of tears.

They would not become the body of Christ. Yet a body must be found for Him. For it was not the will of God that He should execute what still remained of the work which God had given Him to do, save with and through means of a body. The body must be found. And He turned to the Gentiles. They were called into the inheritance. The natural branches of the olive were cut off, and we were graffed in. The Gentile church sprang up, and grew from the root and fatness of that olive, and filled the whole earth. They are now the children of the covenant. And the word that gathered them was this: that God had appointed a day in which He should judge the world in righteousness by that *Man* whom He had raised from the dead; and that those who believed in that Man should in that day be with Him manifested as the sons of God, partakers of the glory of His second coming. That second coming was the argument of their gospel. It was the reason for their repentance. They were called to believe in Him who had died, that they might share in the glory of Him who was about to come from the right hand of God. The promise made unto the fathers included that first coming to bear the sins of the world. The preaching of

John, of our Lord Himself, of His disciples in the days of His flesh, was, to hope for—to embrace that first coming; to expect that death; to bear it; to behold that risen One, and to receive the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. That promise had now become a fact. But the promise made unto the Gentiles was, that He should come the second time unto salvation. That was the promise made unto the Gentiles. That is the promise of which *we* are the children. And His second coming is the day of vengeance to which the world *now* looks. As St. Paul says,[1] "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." The day of vengeance to the world, and the day of the fulfilment of our Christian hope is the same. For in our baptism, we say we renounce everything for Christ; we will have nothing except through Christ; we will hold all things only as members of Christ; we will count nothing worth but for His sake; we will wait for real possessions until His kingdom be revealed. We say, in *this* life we will have no hope, that we may lay hold on the hope set before us. We will love only the Lord; we will desire only His appearing; we will long for nothing but His kingdom; we will wait for the morning. We will set our affections on the things that are with Christ, and which He will

[1] 2 Thess. i. 9.

bring with Him. We will count the sorrows and losses, the afflictions and persecutions of this life, —we will count them light. We will feel our chief sorrow to be the prolonged absence of our Lord. We will mourn until He come. And, therefore, St. Paul glories in the Thessalonians for their patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations that they endured; and says, that that was a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that they might be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which they were suffering: "Seeing," says he, "it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." When shall this be? "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." The day of vengeance is the day of hope.

You can therefore now understand the language of the prophet in the second and third verses of our text, and how these are yet to be fulfilled as part of that work for which our Lord was anointed. The day of vengeance is the day in which the mourners shall be comforted and

anointed with the oil of joy, and clothed with the garment of praise. Let us consider the language of some other parts of the New Testament, and see how they unfold this prophecy.

St. Paul says of himself, we are troubled, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, alway delivered unto death. Death worketh in us; but we do not faint, knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus. In this tabernacle we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: "for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." We groan because of the body of sin and death. Who shall deliver us from the body of this death—wretched men that we are. We groan, because of that flesh which will not please God, and which must be cut off. We groan, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies. We have received the firstfruits of the Spirit. We have received of the Spirit from that Man who was raised from the dead, in whom mortality hath been swallowed up of life. By that Spirit we eat His flesh, and drink His blood. By that Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body. But it is suffering; it is mortification; it is self-denial; it is crucifixion. We cannot bear that it should always be thus. If any man be really fighting the good fight of faith, and by the Holy Ghost mortifying his members which are on the earth, he cannot bear to think of such a conflict, save

as he thinks of its end, of Him in whom it has ended—save as he hopes. He shall endure, if he know that he is an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ. He shall endure, if he can say, we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together; if he hope for the glory which shall be revealed. We are saved by hope, and we value hope, because we groan under that which at present is. Yet God hides from us the full misery of that which at present is, because He knows that we could not bear it; and His Spirit maketh intercession Himself, where we cannot follow Him, with groanings that cannot be uttered. And our hope is "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him." We look for the Saviour from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." That is the hope which saves us. That is the hope, by means of which the Holy Ghost is able to keep us patient. Are any of you patient without that hope? Are any of you able to go on from day to day, without being conscious that, but for that hope, you would give up the struggle, and surrender yourselves to live after the flesh? Are you conscious of no longing, no panting after the accomplishment of that promise? Are you never weary and ready to faint, and do you not know what it is for the hope of the resurrection at the coming of our Lord to come into you, like

a well of water in the desert? Then, brethren, what has come of your baptismal vow? Are you really standing to your renunciation of the devil, and the world, and the flesh? Are you mortifying all the deeds of the body? Is there no form of living unto the world, which you are failing to cease from? Are you giving up all for Christ's sake? All—I don't mean all your goods, or all your prospects—but I mean all your own will. Are you giving up all your own will, out of obedience to Christ, out of love to Him who loved you and who died for you? I should think not. Otherwise you would think more of that hope, and more frequently. You are *not* groaning! Be assured you have then some comfort which you have yet to renounce. You are *not* mourning! Then you are like those Nazarenes who were not able to appreciate Jesus. You do not appreciate the hope which God has set before you! But if you do not, must there not be something far, very far wrong with you? Jesus Himself endured by hope. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, and despised the shame; and having by hope endured, He is set down at the right hand of God. He looked forward to that joy, and so He was able to endure. And shall you endure, who must follow Him, and bear His cross, in any other way than as He did? You say you *are* enduring. But you are not thinking much of the coming of your Lord, and of the changing of your vile bodies into the likeness of His glorious body.

Then, dear brethren, be assured, you are not hating sin as He hated it. You are not seeing as He saw it, that the whole world is lying in wickedness. You are allowing yourselves in something which He allowed not Himself in. You are sparing yourself in something where He spared not Himself. You are hoping from men; from flesh, your own, or that of another. You are not laying the axe to the root of the tree. You are keeping a little hold of the life of the flesh. You are, in some respect or other, of the world. You have still some anchorage there. You are still *loving* the world in some of its regions, in some of its things or of its circumstances. You *should* be dead to the world, and alive unto God. But it seems you are still alive to somewhat of the world. I say, it is time for every one of you who feels not continually that the hope of the resurrection, and the promise of the Lord's second coming, is the one anchor of his soul, and one comfort of his weary conflict, to bethink himself, and search into his ways, lest there be in him some fatal shortcoming, lest he should prove in the end a profane person like Esau, who for a mess of pottage sold his birthright. Be meek and willing to try yourselves by this gospel, for it is the gospel for the day. It is the trying word for this day. It is the light for revealing the darkness of this day, and for finding out whether you be lovers of God or not. 'Tis not he who commendeth himself that is approved, nor he whom men commend; no, not he whom *all* men commend. Be not

therefore content with standing well with the religious world. The Scribes and Pharisees stood high in the religious world. But the gospel revealed them, detected them. "How can *ye* believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only." So Jesus spake to them, and they gnashed their teeth at Him, and disclosed themselves that they were liars and murderers.

You know, brethren, the state of Christ's Church. Are not we broken in pieces? Are not we in bondage? Here in bondage to kings; there in bondage to the people; elsewhere in bondage to priests; in another place, in bondage to men of parts and talents, the persuasive men of the day, the hard heads, and the sharp bitter talkers, and the spiritual guerilla leaders; in bondage to superstition; in bondage to a pretended simplicity: in all shapes, the adversary resisting, setting aside, crushing, discountenancing the life of God whereever it appears. And yet with all this, and with all the natural fruits it has brought, of unholy, uncharitable, disorderly, disobedient living in individual Christians—with it all—there is triumphing, boasting one against another, measuring ourselves by ourselves, and comparing ourselves among ourselves. The Holy Ghost is mourning, and they who have received the Holy Ghost are triumphing. The Holy Ghost is groaning, and they who have received the Holy Ghost are singing pæans to their idols: hymning praise to

the words and deeds of their leaders in whom they trust.

Should not we be sympathizing with the Holy Ghost? Should not we be filled with the mind of Christ? What state does our Lord expect to find us in? Does not He who is gone away expect us to be mourning—mourning for His absence? And may not all these things have befallen us, befallen His Church I mean in all the earth, for the very purpose of quickening His children to perceive His absence, and to long for His return. The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were offended at the disciples of Christ for their cheerfulness, and their freedom to enjoy what was given them from day to day in this life. And they reasoned with them. But our Lord said, they cannot but rejoice just now. How *can* the children of the bride-chamber mourn while the bridegroom is *with* them? Have not they found the Messiah? Are not they standing daily in His presence, walking with Him, waiting upon Him, and hearing His voice? Do not the warm beams of His love penetrate them? Peace and good-will toward men flow from the lips of Him who is their daily companion. What can *they* think of, but to rejoice, who have suddenly embraced an unexpected deliverance, and whose hearts are high, filled with hope. But the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. Does He mean during the three days in which He lay in the grave? Why they had not time to fast in those

days. They were stunned, they wondered, they accused themselves of credulity. They were scattered, they did nothing together—at best they knew not what to think. But fasting is the act of a man who knows what he is doing. No, it was after He had gathered them altogether again, and had gone in and out among them for forty days, and had been known among them as the risen and immortal Man, and had spoken peace to them, and told them the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, and been received out of their sight; it was then they felt and could appreciate His absence.

That period—the period from His ascension into heaven until His coming again in glory—that period was the time when His disciples should fast, that was the time of mourning. He had promised to make provision for it as a time of mourning. "I will send you a Comforter." When He had ascended on high, out of heaven He sent the Comforter. They were to wait together at Jerusalem until the Holy Ghost should be sent by Him, and by the Father in His name. When He ascended on high, the Father said unto Him, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. And there He received the promise of the Holy Ghost no longer as a promise, but as a fulfilment, and He shed forth the Holy Ghost. He had left them—mourning and needing a comforter. But He remembered them on that throne of His glory. Their exalted Lord remembered those poor

creatures who had been the companions of His earthly pilgrimage—those poor creatures who had forsaken Him, nay, with oaths denied Him. After a few days He sent the Holy Ghost. He sent God the Holy Ghost. And one of the offices of the Holy Ghost was to comfort them under the sorrow of His absence. He comforted them with communion with Jesus; for through Him they were one with Jesus, and were made to eat His flesh, and to drink His blood, and to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He comforted them, by taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them unto them. He comforted them, by enabling them to say, Abba, Father. He comforted them, by making them call one another brethren. He comforted them, because He was the earnest and pledge, the beginning and first-fruits, of that inheritance which Jesus had promised them. He comforted them, because He enabled them to purify themselves, as Jesus was pure. He comforted them, because He enabled them to witness for Jesus, and because He Himself bore witness to them with signs and wonders. By having this Comforter, they were able to bear the absence of their Lord. Without Him they could not have borne it. He was not given as the substitute for Jesus. He was not given, that they might not mourn at all nor be in sorrow. He was given that they might be able to bear a grievous sorrow, a mourning which nothing could bring to an end, except the return of their Lord. He enabled them to look forward to the time

when they should be like their Lord, and should see Him as He is. He was Himself the pledge that that time and that condition should come. He did not bring them that condition. The Comforter did not give them beauty for ashes: but He made the sackcloth and the ashes tolerable.

It is the Lord Jesus Himself who gives beauty for ashes. The Spirit of God is upon *Him* for that. God will judge the world by the *Man* whom He hath ordained. Vengeance belongeth unto that Man. The day of vengeance of our God is part of that which He was anointed to proclaim. And He spake a parable that we might understand our position, and that we might always pray, and not faint.[1] And the parable was this, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto the judge, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. This was the parable. And the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge saith." For the parable is spoken concerning the Church—"And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily."

[1] Luke xviii. 2-8.

And shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him? His elect—but His elect which cry day and night unto Him. Well for them if they have faith enough to do that. For many will not have it. "Nevertheless," saith He, "when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Yes, by His mercy He shall. By His mercy there shall be faith enough to cry day and night unto Him.

His Church is a widow. She is so because He is absent. The disciples could not mourn while He was with them. But His absence has made His Church a widow. And a widow is one who is desolate, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. A widow is one whom men are ready to oppress and afflict, and she has no avenger, and can only look to God. Such is the Church. She has nothing to look for in the world, but to be oppressed and afflicted by men; and if her hope is in this life, she is an assemblage of those who of all men are the most miserable in the earth. And she has an adversary. The same adversary that Jesus had. The flesh, and the whole course of this world, and the prince of the power of the air—the prince of the evil spirits—the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience. If she be faithful, the judges of this world will not take up her cause. The princes of this world will not advance her to honour. She must be oppressed and afflicted, and be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and bear it all meekly and patiently. She must bear men's curses, and utter

blessings in return; she must be reviled and despitefully used and persecuted, and she must save her haters and her persecutors by praying for them. She must be hated of all men, for God is in her. She must have no lovers in this world, for she is the bride of Christ. And how shall she do all this? By the Comforter, and by the hope set before her. The Spirit is with the bride —let us say this reverently, and with godly fear, yet let us say it, for it is true—the Spirit is with the bride, and they speak together, and pray together, and when she can no further pray, He prays; and their common word is this, "even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Thus the widow cries day and night unto Him.

But Jesus Himself avenges this widow. *He* appoints unto her beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. When He sees that her strength is gone, then He comes forth. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." He was raised from the dead, and put on His strength, and was clothed upon with His glorious body; and He shall speak that word to her. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." How did St. Paul comfort himself under his burdens and his sorrows? "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." It is not mere resurrection, for *all* the dead

must rise again; but it is that resurrection which is part of our fellowship with Jesus Christ: it is the resurrection unto beauty and glory. It is the resurrection, not of us alone, but of all who have sorrowed with us. It is not *our* escape; but it is the rolling away of dishonour and reproach from the name and work of God. St. Paul divides the resurrection into various acts. He says, We shall be raised; "but every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." That is *our* order, they that are Christ's at His coming. Immediately upon His coming, they that are Christ's, they that have waited for Him, they that have mourned for His absence, they that have needed the Holy Ghost and His comforts to enable them to bear His absence—they shall rise then. That was the resurrection which St. Paul was so earnest to attain. He knew he might come short of it. "*If by any means* I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." He knew that all must rise from the dead. But there is a resurrection which is an attainment, and which he may lose; and he follows after, if that he may apprehend that for which he has been apprehended of Christ. We have been laid hold of by Christ. In our baptism Christ laid hold upon us. And He laid hold upon us that we might be His—His in the day of His appearing, and that we might rise again as *His* at His coming. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first* resurrection.

And are there some then who attain not to that first resurrection? There are—and who are they? Those who say, my Lord delayeth His coming. Those who can make themselves comfortable in His absence, otherwise than by the comfort of the Holy Ghost, otherwise than by hoping for His return. Those who need no Paraclete; who understand not, perceive not any use for the Holy Ghost as the Comforter; the church which has substituted some other hope in the place of the hope of Christ's coming, which does not say, come, Lord Jesus—cannot say it, because she has a treasure in the earth; the church in that condition which is called Babylon, who saith, "I sit a queen, and am no widow."

And we—what are we saying? Are we saying, "come, Lord Jesus," and desiring that the Spirit should say, "come, Lord Jesus?" Are we desiring the resurrection because Jesus shall then have come, and because we shall then be like Him, by seeing Him as He is? The joy of the resurrection is not merely the joy of deliverance, but it is the joy of the presence of Jesus. Is that the joy which we anticipate, and for which we desire the resurrection?

Perhaps you are unable to say, "come, Lord Jesus?" You would rather that His coming was postponed. Well, do not play the hypocrite. Do not say it, if you cannot say it. Far more wholesome to know that you cannot, and to acknowledge to yourself that you do not desire His coming,

than to impose a duty upon your lips, from which your heart draws back. For is not He with whom you have to do the God who *waits* to be gracious? Let the truth rest in your minds. It will quietly, secretly, effectually, savingly, work its work in you. Let it *rest* in you. After a little season you shall find it a living, moving thing within you. You *shall* gradually be enabled to say, "come, Lord Jesus." For ye are the children of the covenant and of the promises; and you are beloved with that love which drew not back at death, and forgave even the murderers. Bear with the truth, even though it anger you. Let the Holy Ghost who is in you testify to the truth of that which we have spoken. Disregard not that consent that is now moving within your Christian consciences. Be meek, that *all* the gospel may spread itself out before you. Say not, "we see," and recovering of sight *shall* be given to you by Him who is about to come, and whom ye shall speedily behold with joy, when He shall come in the clouds of heaven.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON XII.

CHRISTIANITY NOT A DOCTRINE BUT AN OPERATION.

JOHN vi. 25-35.

"And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. They said therefore unto Him, What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

THIS chapter relates certain circumstances of our Lord's ministry that are of peculiar interest. A great multitude were miraculously fed by Him. By His benediction He multiplied a few loaves into a sufficiency for thousands. They said, This

is the prophet that should come into the world: this is the prophet like unto Moses. They reason thus: "Our fathers did eat manna, bread from heaven, angels' food. Moses fed our fathers. This man hath fed us. He is the prophet like unto Moses: no doubt this man is the prophet that should come into the world." And they were coming to take Him by force to make Him a king. He departed and got out of their way. In the dark night, during a fearful storm, He walked across the Sea of Tiberias, bringing aid to His disciples who were labouring amid the billows, and with them He went to Capernaum. Those who had decided that He was the promised prophet, and who had determined to make Him a king, found Him there. To make Him a king, and to be fed by Him, that was their idea, the project which they had in view. Moses had fed their fathers forty years in the wilderness. It was clear that this man could do the same, if He would. They expect that He will. They suppose that to be part at least of the purpose of His appearing. They come to Him; they will be always with Him.

But that miraculous feeding had been only an occasional thing. It had been an act of charity to a hungering multitude. It had been an outward sign of His mission. It had been a parable of that which He was sent to do. They should have learned a great deal from it. Moses did something more than feed their fathers. He gave them also a divine law, and constituted them into a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. He

brought them near to God by sacrifice. He brought them into covenant with God, and made them worshippers of God. Shall the prophet like unto Moses do less? Shall He only feed you with loaves? Is there to be no progress, no better covenant, no greater sacrifice, no better blood; no nearer approach to God, no more exalted worship? Does God ever repeat the same thing, the same literal thing, a second time? Had ye known the scriptures, ye should have known of the promise of a better covenant and better sacrifices. Moses said to your fathers concerning that prophet, that God was to put His words into His mouth, and that He was to speak to you from God—not old things, not the same things, but further things. And have not ye learned from Jeremiah and others something of a new and better covenant? But no; ye remember not Moses except in the giving of bread. Ye come not to Me, because I am that prophet by whom ye may be led further on in the ways of God. Ye come not to Me because ye saw the miracles, and perceived that I am that prophet. Ye think of Me as ye think of Moses, as a giver of bread.

It is true that Moses fed you; nay, rather, it was God who gave you that bread. But they who ate it are dead. But when God returns to the earth, He brings with Him something higher and better than that which He had formerly given. He sends you now something better than manna —better, truer bread—for they that eat of it shall not die, but live for ever. Jesus is not to be

followed for mere bread's sake. He is not going to do as Moses did. Do not follow Him, or make a business with Him,[1] that your natural mortal life may be sustained for a few years.

These men are much disappointed at this. He speaks to them of another life. He *is* going to give meat. He calls Himself the Son of man, sealed of God the Father. They are still persuaded that He is that prophet from among their brethren like unto Moses. They believe that God the Father *has* sealed Him. And therefore they enquire, "What shall we *do* that we might[2] work the works of God?" God must be about to make an advance. We know somewhat of our part under the old covenant. We go up to Jerusalem at the appointed season. Our priests fulfil the offices of the temple. We present our sacrifices, and *do* as Moses commanded. But what is our part in the new covenant? What shall be our part, now that the prophet like unto Moses has appeared? "Jesus[3] answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent." This is your part; to receive faith from God; to suffer God to put faith into you; to exercise faith. So He answered them. And the gospel never gave another answer; gives no other answer unto this day.

But their minds are still running on the manna and the temporal food. And they see that Jesus is not going to feed them again, or indeed at all

[1] Ἐργάζεσθε [2] Ἐργαζώμεθα [3] Verse 29.

from day to day, as Moses had fed their fathers. If He is to feed them only once, then it is not clear that He is the prophet like unto Moses after all. We thought Him the prophet when we thought He was going to feed us. But He says, we are not to be fed as our fathers were. It is a serious question, it is a momentous question, difficult of solution, bringing after it tremendous consequences, whether this be the prophet or not? If we mistake, may not we lose Moses himself and incur the judgment of those who follow a false prophet? We are afraid to believe in Him. We are afraid on insufficient grounds to commit ourselves to Him. They therefore inquire of Him a little further. Thou art not going to do what Moses did? Our fathers had good reason to believe in Moses; and Thou sayest the present work of God is to believe in Thee. We thought we had found a good reason to believe in Thee. But Thou hast taken it away from us. Thou art not to do for us that which Moses did for our fathers? "What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." What dost Thou work? We are afraid of losing Moses if we believe in Thee.

Now that was not a wicked state of mind. It appears not to us as yet to be a wicked state of mind, whatever our blessed Lord may see. He sees the evil heart of unbelief. He will shew it; or rather He will cause it to shew itself. He

imputes it not thus far. He acts and speaks thus far, according to appearances, and these are favourable. It was not a wicked state of mind. It was a carnal and ignorant state of mind. Moses, well known, truly obeyed, rightly believed in, would have prepared them to recognise the prophet like unto him. But our Lord is patient with them: and He seeks to make them believe Moses aright. It was not Moses that gave you the manna, but God. Moses was given you that you might know God. Under Moses, ye should have seen what God was, and how He cared for you and made you His, and you should have been prepared to trust Him, and to receive from Him all that which was in His heart to bestow. God rained manna from heaven. Your fathers believed that it came from Him, and they used it, and were fed with it for forty years. But God now does something more. For He sends from heaven the true bread. "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

A good work has been wrought in these men's minds; not perhaps in their hearts as yet. They believed. They could not shake off the persuasion that Jesus was the prophet like unto Moses. And they continued to listen unto Him. And He spake things to them concerning Himself, so deep as He had never spoken before. They really expected manna again. And they were not absolutely wrong in that expectation. But they expected the *prophet* to give them the manna, and

to do it for their bodies, and to be a mighty and successful head for their party against all the world; and there they erred. It was God, and not Moses who had given that manna. And God does the same now, only in a higher sense. This is the prophet like unto Moses, but He is Himself the manna also. "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." The true bread is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life not to your party, but unto the world. This was difficult doctrine. But the men have felt such assurance of the speaker being a prophet of God, that they reject it not. Nay, they call Him Lord, and believing that the word which He speaks must be true, and that the thing which He offers to them must be good, they say, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." They knew not what they said. Yet out of their hearts, in their ignorance, they said it —as children do. For they had a confidence in Jesus. As children, who though they do not comprehend their parents' words, yet receive with confidence and readiness any thing that their parents offer them.

Finding in them this condition of mind, our Lord could proceed. He says to them again, "I am the bread of life." I am Myself the bread of life. Come to Me and ye shall never hunger; believe in Me, and ye shall never thirst. The question now is, do you believe that? Do you believe that I am the true manna, that which the manna signified—represented? Has Moses taught you to understand that, and to expect it? Moses

spake of Christ. In all that he spake, and commanded, and ordained, he spake of Christ. Believers in God learned from Moses concerning Christ, and Moses prepared those for Christ who believed in God. They saw farther than the outside. They saw Christ in it all. They saw the bread of God which giveth life unto the world in the manna, which fed only the mortal body. Have *ye* so learned Moses? Know ye what ye ask, when ye say, "Lord evermore give us this bread?"

Man needs not food only but life. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Flesh and blood, that which came of Adam, could enter the promised land, but it cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Jesus hath come forth from God, to bring men unto the kingdom of God. It is no feeding of the natural life that will prepare men for that. It is no cultivation of the natural man, no perfectionating of his natural powers that will prepare a man for that. Instruction of his mind, ripening of his faculties, and turning them to high objects, storing him with all mysteries, and with all knowledge, enriching him with all wisdom, prepares not a man for inheriting the kingdom of God. The true bread, the bread of which man really stands in need if he is to inherit the kingdom of God, is something better than the body or even the soul of the natural man can receive. The true bread is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. The true bread is

a person, a person in whom is that life which can inherit the kingdom of God, and who has power to make alive with the same—a person, in whom that which is of Adam may be removed and may cease, in whom mortal life may end, and a new, eternal communicable life of man may begin. He that cometh unto Him, and believeth in Him, and is joined unto Him, and abideth in Him, shall live with that higher life in which a man *can* please God. Thus, by gentle steps, did our Lord up to a certain point open the eyes of these men and instruct them how to think of Him aright.

Now we are in no danger of falling into their mistake literally. We all know that the temporal and bodily existence is not the object provided for by the gospel. But if we consider their mistake more largely, we shall perhaps find ourselves not so clear of it in spirit as we suppose. The kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God had been preached to these men, and they were ignorant that flesh and blood could not inherit it, and they came to Jesus, not for the life which could enter the kingdom of God, but for the food of that life which could not enter it. Their error was a misconception of what the kingdom of heaven was, and of the condition of those who could enter it.

Well, then, what are our thoughts of the kingdom of heaven, and of the condition of those who shall enter it? We are aware that an unconverted man shall not enter it. We are aware that except a man be born again, he cannot see it.

But do we think that if a man shall come to have his mind turned away from the natural devices and occupations of those who are descended from Adam, and shall have undergone such a change that he has new views, and opinions, and dispositions, and habits, and desires, and employments; do we think that *then* he shall be able to enter the kingdom of God? If we think so, then we are, in our way, in their mistake. Now, what did our Lord say? He said, "I am the bread of life." I, the man, the person whom you see—I, who speak to you, am the bread of life. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst. He shall have that meat which perisheth not, but which endureth unto everlasting life. The bread of God is He that giveth life unto the world. Not he that feedeth the world, but He that giveth life. Not he that feedeth the living, but He that maketh alive. The life is more than meat. Life was given to Adam when he was created. Life is given to a man when he is born. The giving of life is the giving of that which was not there before. The sustaining of life, the directing of life, the guidance, correction, improvement, change of life, is not the giving of a new thing. The true bread giveth life. And those who have not this new thing, this life, shall not enter the kingdom of God.

The change demanded of those to whom the gospel is preached and the kingdom of heaven offered, is not the old life which we have from Adam turned from evil to good. It is not the

natural mind, loving God instead of hating Him, and pleasing Him instead of resisting Him; and that through the influence of some strong conviction, or some new powerful persuasion. It is not the natural man made spiritual, through mere change of food, or change of doctrine, or through greater abundance of food or of doctrine, through clear shining of truth, or more correct use of the faculties, or more earnest application of them, or more earnest effort of the will, or change of taste and habit from one line of thought to another: that is not the change. All these presuppose life. They assume that by Christianity the natural mortal life is modified into spiritual, eternal life. They assume that by some mental moral process, the corrupt may be made heir of incorruption. They assume that by some means other than death, extinction of the mortal life, and resurrection by the power of a *new* immortal life, a man may inherit the kingdom of God. The bread of God giveth life; He confers life. It is a real new birth. It is a real new life. It is a real new sonship. It is a real partaking of the divine nature. Nothing less than that shall connect a man with the kingdom of God. Without that he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The resurrection of the saints is by the power of a new life, which was bestowed upon them, of which they were made sharers when they were born again of water and of the Spirit, and of which the Lord's Supper was the sustenance. In the incarnation of the Son of God, a mighty person entered into our

nature, to whom in our nature God hath given to have life in Himself. And He brought forth the mortal by the way of death and resurrection into immortality. In His person the old thing did utterly perish, as it ought, and the curse was executed; and the new thing sprang up. And He gives life to those who come unto Him, who believe in Him.

And what are the characteristics of this person? He is a son of man, but He is one whom God the Father hath sealed. What was this sealing? Read that which is written,[1] "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." This was the sealing. A seal is a confirmation. When a document is signed and sealed, it is confirmed and made sure, so far as it can be made sure. Thus

[1] John i. 29-34.

John the Baptist was surely to know Him. The dove descended and remained upon Him. The baptism with the Holy Ghost was known and sealed by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him. The word was spoken from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus was the Son of man sealed by God the Father. I must ask you to turn to another passage of Scripture.[1] St. Peter says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount." He refers to the marvellous event of the transfiguration, of which only three men were permitted to be the witnesses. And Peter feels a confirmation in it.[2] By that event, by those words from heaven, this Man is sealed.

This person who giveth life is the Son of man, yet God hath sealed Him, hath spoken from heaven concerning Him, that He is His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased. And He hath further, in the sight of many, and especially of one witness prepared beforehand, John the Baptist, and who hath borne record, baptized Him with the Holy Ghost, and pointed Him out as the

[1] 2 Peter i. 16-18. [2] Matthew xvii. 1-5.

baptizer with the Holy Ghost. Thus, in the days of His flesh, He was sealed. And He was sealed again in entering upon His new form of being. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." This *person* is the bread of God which giveth life unto the world.

This person giveth life. He is the Son of God, and He gives a life which makes us sons of God. He confers upon us that new relation, and it is not a merely nominal relation. It is a real relation. He was truly Son of man; He was also truly Son of God. We are truly, by nature, sons of man, and He makes us truly sons of God. We are like to Adam by being his sons. Any likeness to God that we shall have, we shall have by being sons of God. Not by persuasions, convictions, meditations, vows, resolutions, outward laws, but by being sons of God, and partakers of the divine nature. Not by believing a book, nor by yielding to an argument, nor by being occupied with a persuasion, nor by being zealous for a doctrine, nor by being connected with an institution, nor by belonging to a church, nor by waiting upon a set of observances. Not without these, yet not by means of them. No, it is a person, a living person, who gives the life which we need: and no word, or office, or ministry, can give it, though it may be the channel or instrument through which it is really given. A man cannot give it to himself by any intensity of faith. He does not give it to himself by the act of coming to Christ, or of

believing in Christ. He comes to Jesus, that Jesus may give him life. He believes in Jesus as the only giver of life. A man does not make a covenant with God, and *so* obtain life. We cannot first choose God, and then, in consequence thereof, be chosen by Him.

Christianity is not a form of doctrine, or a bright discovery of truth, or an opening of men's minds to see more clearly, or a moving of their hearts to love and hate aright. Christianity is not a mere revelation; nor its grace a disposing of man toward a revelation. It has to do with persons—with the will of persons, and their actions, and their continual, eternal activities. Any mere acting upon the soul of the natural man falls as far short of Christianity as the feeding of these men's bodies would have done. Christianity is itself a continuous thing. It is—its essence is—the will, and movement, and activity of the adorable persons of the Godhead. It is a revelation of God, because it is a coming forth of God to act, continuously to act. It is a revelation of God to those who in it do see God, meet with God, experience the acting of God. St. John says,[1] "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us);

[1] 1 John i. 1-3.

that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." It has been an acting of persons upon persons, a knowing of persons by persons. It has indeed been a discovery of doctrine; but it has been so because it is an entering of God among His creatures, unto action and movement among them. Hence came the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Not that Christianity was a revelation of that as an abstract doctrine; but that Christianity was an acting of God, who hath acted according to that which He is, namely, three persons and one God. And in like manner of all other doctrines, if they be abstracted from persons they are not the end of Christianity. Nor is the belief in them the object of Christianity. They are taught indeed, and the intellect of man is capable of perceiving them, but a man is not saved by his perception of them. They are glorious objects of meditation. They exalt the mind. They are wholesome food for the mind. But as abstract doctrines, they are the meat that perisheth. If they are abstracted from the persons of the Godhead, and the activities of the persons of the Godhead, they are the meat that perisheth. And we must not come to Jesus for that meat. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth." Hearing these abstract truths, meditating them, delighting in them, feeling their greatness, having an appetite for them,—dear brethren, it is all very good and necessary. So is

the food of your bodies necessary and good; and yet you eat your daily bread and die. And you meditate these sublime thoughts and die. Your food leaves you where it found you—a mortal man. And these sublime meditations of truth leave you where they found you, a mortal man, a son of Adam, and nothing more—mere flesh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

The gospel as a word, a book, a history, a doctrine, a scheme of doctrine, saves no man, quickens no man. To believe it historically, to believe it doctrinally, to admire it, to expound it, to be zealous for it, doctrinally, makes no *vital* change upon any man. The gospel has another object. Its object is to make men believe in Jesus to the end that Jesus personally may act, may act upon men; not upon their bodies feeding them, not upon their minds teaching them; not that, not merely that, no, but upon their persons, giving them everlasting life. The *vital* change is made by the gift of eternal life.

Jesus Himself did not merely meditate. He did not merely know and love. He became man; He became Son of man. He took another life. His union with man was a real personal fact. It was not a fiction, legal or otherwise. It was not the undertaking of a cause, *mentally*, sympathetically, as an appointed advocate or a devoted friend may do. It was a real union with man. It was a real taking on of man's mortal life. He knew its reality. He saved man not by having a doctrine concerning men, and a doctrine concerning God;

but by humbling Himself and being born a man —a sharer in human nature. His union with us was not a thought, or a fiction, but a fact. It was the acting of a person. And as He saved by an act or event personal, so they that shall live eternally, must do so, not in virtue of a thought, or a way of thinking, not by having a doctrine concerning God, and a doctrine concerning man— how true soever, how divine soever, how much soever it be a doctrine of pure revelation, not in virtue of that, but in virtue of an acting or event personal. As the Son of God became Jesus the Saviour, by taking to Himself that which He had not before, namely, the life of man, which was mortal, and in which He could not but die, save by some miracle, which miracle, even in the midst of His strong crying and tears, He did not ask His heavenly Father to perform; so the children of men must become the sons of God by an act of the Lord Jesus, in which He gives to them the life that is in Him as Son of God, and which is everlasting, and which they had not before. This is an act. The act of a person. An act upon a person. The act of Jesus Christ upon each individual person of those who shall live eternally.

But some one will say, we are saved by faith, and faith is an embracing of the truth. We *are* saved by faith. But, dear brethren, the faith that saves us is believing God. Abraham is the father of the faithful, the grand example of a

believing man. And Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. He did not believe a doctrine. A *man* could have proved a doctrine to him, philosophically or otherwise. A man can prove the doctrine of justification by faith. But Abraham believed not a doctrine, not the doctrine of justification by faith, not the doctrine of the Trinity, not the doctrine of vicarious suffering. By implication he believed all these, for he believed God, and saw Jesus according to his measure; he saw the day of Jesus and was glad. He believed God in that which God then spake, and by faith he waited upon the actings of God, and by the actings of God he was saved in his day. He believed God. God said to him, "Sarah shall have a son." He believed, and God acted, and Sarah had a son. But how does that faith save? Does faith make a mortal man immortal? Does faith make a son of Adam a son of God? No. Faith, that is, believing in God, enables a man to accept and undergo, and to become the subject of such acting of God upon him, as at any time God is pleased to perform. God's actings upon men prior to the incarnation, and His actings upon men subsequent to the incarnation, are not the same. By faith Abraham, Sarah, and all the saints, were subject to the acting of God in their time. By the same faith, after Jesus came, men were subject to the further, greater actings of God in their time. Nay, faith in God was still capable of degrees. For some believed God and were healed of sicknesses, who

did not believe God and receive eternal life. Faith saves us, because it is believing God. It saves us, because it makes us yield to God, submit to the actings of God. It makes us sons of God, when the act of God, to which in faith we submit, is the act of making us sons. And, therefore, our Lord says, "He that cometh unto Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Faith did not make them sons of God. *He* gave them power to become the sons of God. He gave them life. He, that person, gave the life. He who was the Son of God; He whom God the Father had sealed, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He whom God the Father had sealed, sending upon Him the Holy Ghost in visible form of a dove. He whom God the Father had sealed as the baptizer with the Holy Ghost. He whom God the Father had, afterwards during the course of His ministry, and after He had chosen witnesses whom He could bring with Him to behold and to hear on the mount—sealed by exhibiting Him in a prefigured foretaste of that eternal life with which mortality should be swallowed up, of that eternal life, that glory and triumph of which His mortal flesh should through death become a partaker; sealed as He who should give such a life to men, as in each of them—whether like Elias translated without tasting of death, whether like Moses raised up

from the dead—such as in each of them would be everlasting, and in which they all, in body, soul, and spirit, should be presented by Him unto His Father, and held by Him as His brethren and His fellow-heirs eternally, for the glory of His Father.

For the acting of God under the gospel is that of making sons, and of bringing them unto glory. When God was about to bring many sons unto glory, then He sent Jesus His Son, and perfected Him to be the Captain of their salvation. Christianity is not merely a scheme for making good men and good women. Christianity is a great acting of God Almighty, in bringing many sons unto glory. At one time He made the worlds. That was one great acting of God. And now He is bringing many sons unto glory. That is Christianity. For that end, the blood of Jesus was shed for the sins of the whole world. Even the law of Moses was not a mere scheme for making men good. It was the formation of a typical nation, in whom, and by whom, a continual representation of divers mysteries of God and prefigurations of His purpose might be exhibited, and the worship of the living and true God might be maintained on the earth. That law did not give life to one man; could not give life. It found men mortal; it left them so. Grace came afterwards; grace, divine favour, divine gifts, life —came by Jesus Christ.

Are we then very sons of God? Hath Jesus given us that eternal life? Do we consider what

we have been made, and what precious gift has been bestowed upon us? Or do we shrink from believing so much concerning ourselves?

Remember that it is a *gift*. It is not of yourselves. The sons of God are not born of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God. It is a condition that arises out of our being one with Jesus. Its continuance depends upon our abiding in Him. You may cease to abide in Him. You abide in Him by believing in His name. This is the work of God, to believe in Him whom He hath sent. He is the keeper of your life. You live by participation with Him, and your life is sustained by eating of His flesh, and drinking of His blood. By faith you continue to yield to the continuous action of God. He kept His Father's commandment; as a believing man He kept His Father's commandment, and abode in His love. So ye shall abide. And God, who said of Jesus, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," shall acknowledge you for sons. And ye shall not want for the sealing, from Him who is the baptizer with the Holy Ghost; nor for the victory, in that day when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON XIII.

GOD'S ORDINANCES ARE EVERMORE REALITIES.

JOHN vi. 36-40.

"But I said unto you, That ye also have seen Me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me: and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise Him up at the last day."

THESE men thought that they believed that Jesus was the prophet like unto Moses; or, in other words, the Messiah. Our blessed Lord knew that their ideas of Him were wordly and sensual, and that their object in coming to Him was sensual. Yet He does not impute that to them. Them that come to Him in any way, He would not cast off. He takes occasion to instruct them a little, and to shew them who He was, and what He had come forth from God to do: that if possible some of them might conceive a desire after that life which He had come to bestow, and after that spiritual food by which it should be nourished. Faith cometh by hearing: and this is the work of

God, that they should believe on Him whom He hath sent. Faith is that by which man can yield himself to the operations of God. It is that by which he can yield himself to this great operation of God, in which eternal life is given him. Jesus came to give life, spiritual life. He could give it where there was faith. He therefore spake and shewed Himself that He might be seen and believed in, and to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed in His name.

It is of great consequence, dear brethren, to read holy scripture aright. Not partially, not fragmentarily, not by texts and favourite passages, but in its entireness. Otherwise we shall have our minds filled with partial views of the truth of God, and incapacitated for a full and effectual, nay, for an honest and logical apprehension of it. One part of holy writ is not intended to stand without another part. For instance, it is said in one place, "He that believeth on Me, hath everlasting life." Elsewhere it is said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." In one place it is written, "By grace ye are saved through faith." In another, "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us." 'Tis said, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" and again, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." We cannot without error take our doctrine from one of these scriptures alone, while the other is left out of sight.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He is the giver of life. He can give it where He finds faith. By faith a man can submit himself to His hands. And faith is not an intellectual assent to certain doctrines. Faith is believing God. A believer knows truth, because he believes God who has spoken it. He does not believe it because he can demonstrate it, or because his teacher can demonstrate it. No man, no reasoning, can make a man a believer. Even our Lord Jesus Christ did not make these men believers by any persuasion of His. If persuasion could have done it, would not His have done it? for never man spake like that Man. But He attempts it not. Faith is not to be produced in that way. "Faith cometh by hearing:" and therefore is the word of God spoken. But it comes by a spiritual operation; it is the gift of God. It comes by a spiritual operation, not without hearing, yet not by mere force of hearing, but by the power of God. The word is spoken to the ear and to the understanding, and so spoken, it is the instrument of God: and He gives faith thereby. God acts by means. He acts upon His creatures by means. He has made man such a creature as he is, even body, soul, and spirit. And He acts upon man by such means as are suited to a creature having body, soul and spirit. He acts upon the *whole* man. He engages the whole man in all that He does with him. His senses, his understanding, his spirit—He acts upon them all. But it is *He* that

acts. He acts by the means, and not without them, not upon those who do not use them. Yet not by the power of the means is the effect produced, but by the power of God. Faith is the gift of God. There is a divine discernment in it, higher than sense, deeper than reason. Flesh and blood have not revealed that which the believer knows. He who made you, makes you believers. He hides from the wise and prudent, and He reveals unto babes. You hear, you wait upon hearing:—the word to men is, "Hear, and your soul shall live." For faith cometh by hearing. But it cometh by hearing, because He who speaketh is God, and because His voice is a mighty voice. It is the Lord that gave the word, however great the company, however various the individuals that scatter it; and that is the secret of its might. Would any one make another believe, would any one deliver his friend or his brother from unbelief, let him speak to him that word which the Lord gave. Let him lead him to where that word is scattered. Would any one be delivered from doubt, let him eschew the reasoning of men; let him hear, where they speak who speak from God. God is faithful to His own instrument. Men may not be so. Men may speak as the Scribes did who sat in Moses' seat; themselves never yet having heard or believed. They may publish the very word which God gave and yet be themselves ignorant of it. Yet through hearing of them faith is given to others. For God is not unfaithful. He meets those who go in His ways. And this is His way

for giving faith. He meets you for the purpose of giving you faith, and He will give it if He finds you in that way of His.

Let none say therefore, "Faith is a gift of God. He gives it to whom He will: He hath not given it me; that is the reason why I am not a believer." Let not your wicked flesh so prompt you. And if it do so prompt you, believe it not. Satan is a liar and a murderer. But God is true, and He giveth life. And the will of God is that you should live. Hath not His eye looked for you among the hearers of His word? Hath not He faithfully sent His word, and not suffered it to fail for want of many to scatter it? Might not you have sat under the hearing of it all these many years of your life? Have not all they who heard believed? And has He looked for you in vain among the hearers of the word? There you were, but you heard it not as God's word. There you were, but not as meeting God in one of His ways wherein He walks among men. There you were, but you brought not your ear with you ready for hearing the word of God. You were afraid what God might say to you. You knew He had cause to be angry with you. You were afraid of His voice, as the voice of displeasure, condemnation, reproof, too just to be resisted, too piercing to be endured. You sat there, and you shut your ears to God. Your will was not to hear God. You professed to come to His ordinance, but your will was not at all to meet Him therein. And therefore you did not meet Him. If you had met Him,

He would have spoken to you, not of His displeasure, but of your preciousness; not of anger, but of mercy; not of condemnation, but of forgiveness; not of your sins, but of one who bare your sins in His own body on the tree, and by whose stripes you are healed. The reason why you are not a believer is this, not that God willed not to work faith, but that you willed not to hear. God was there, that He might work faith. God was there, waiting to be gracious to you. That word was the instrument of His grace, but you were unwilling to hear it, and you did not hear it. Faith was on its way to you, but it did not come; for faith cometh by hearing, and ye would not hear. God meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, the people in whose heart are His ways. His *way* is strength to the upright, but destruction to the workers of iniquity. Duplicity makes the pure light of God darkness. Hypocrisy hinders every act of grace, for it would make it a covering of rottenness, it would make God a servant of man's selfishness. A heart unused to yield, unbroken to obey, makes the supremacy of the ruler intolerable, even the supremacy of God's Christ. Oh! let man beware of wickedness, for the wicked will not even *hear* God. Your past sins shall not destroy you, if you will only hear the voice of God. True, you have destroyed yourself, but in Him is your help found. Hear Him; His first words shall be peace, and He will give you ability to sin no more.

And how does Jesus give life? We have seen that God gives faith by hearing, by the means or instrument of hearing. Thus the Father draws to Christ. And Jesus has come to do not His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. And this is the Father's will, that of all which He hath given Him He should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. "In Him was life," and God gave Him "power over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to as many as the Father gave to Him." He gives eternal life. And the present enquiry is, how does He give it? As there was an eternal means or ordinance for that first act of God in which He giveth faith, and makes a man come to Christ, and gives a man to Christ; so there must be a means or ordinance by which Jesus gives eternal life to those who so come unto Him. That means or ordinance is baptism. Jesus gives life in baptism. We are made one with Christ by means of baptism. Baptism is ordained of God for that end. His purpose in baptism is to make us one with Him; one with His Son, who is alive, and who liveth unto Him eternally. We are baptized into Him who died and rose again and liveth for evermore, that we may be dead to sin, but alive unto God.

When a man is baptized, God acts. It is not a human ordinance. God appointed it. He *appointed* it; He *uses* it; and He *is faithful* to it. Your baptism was an act of God, it was an act of Jesus. You did not see Him acting. You cannot see Him acting. Spiritual acts are not cognizable by

your senses. The bestowment of eternal life was a spiritual act. It was your being united to the Son of God by the Holy Ghost. You did not perceive that with your senses. But God has given you faith. And if you stir up your faith, you shall perceive it by a spiritual discernment. God has assisted your faith by giving you an outward part in that ordinance which your senses and your understanding *can* deal with. And somewhat you can perceive in that outward part, somewhat you can learn from it. Even the outward part speaks to you of the washing away of sin by God's hand; and of the death unto sin, and of the new life. But in the outward thing you see no operativeness, no power of making you a son of God, alive unto God. It seems to leave you where it found you. You see in that thing done by men no such operativeness. But baptism is not a thing done by men; nor is the outward thing which you see, and from which you can learn somewhat, anything more than a part. Baptism is an ordinance of God. That which is done there, all that is done there, whether visible or spiritual, is done by God. His acts return not unto Him void. They do accomplish that unto which He sends them. Was the word given by the Lord mighty only when He uttered it? Nay, but it was mighty in the mouths of all the great company who published it. Is the ordinance of God mighty only when He shall visibly and personally put His own hand to it? Nay, but the ordinance of God is mighty in the hands of all to whom the use or

dispensation of it is committed. It does that for which He has ordained it. Jesus giveth life. From the right hand of God He sends life. His Church on earth is His hand. He hath left with His Church His ordinances. His Church in faith administers His ordinances. In her hand they are external things. But she is His hand, and in His hand they are spiritual. In her hand baptism is an external thing, an outward use of material things: but she looks not at herself or her hand. For she is His hand, and she looks to Him, and she beholds Him making an inward use of spiritual things. She beholds Him by faith. She *believes* that He does that. She does not doubt that He does it. She does not merely suppose that He does it. She does not persuade herself that He does it. She does not anxiously and uncertainly hope that He does it. She is His handmaid. She has really done in His ordinance that which He commanded her, and she believes that He really has done that which He promised in that ordinance. She is His handmaid, and she believes in her Lord, that when, according to His commandment, His ministers do baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, He Himself giveth life, and makes the man a son of God.

Dear brethren, the holy things of God are become so common that we know not what mighty things they are. These words—names of the holy persons of the Godhead—are so often pronounced, that we think they can be pronounced, and God

not know it. We think they can be pronounced by a minister of God, in the house of God, as a part of a holy ordinance of God's own appointment, and that God notices it not, is not with them in their utterance, acts not along with them. We think that Jesus, who shall bring every *idle* word into judgment, that Jesus to whom we shall give an account for the deeds done in the body, takes no account of that word, not idle, but spoken in His name, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" —takes no account of that deed done by His command. Verily, Christian men think of their God almost as the ancients thought of their false gods. As if He was sometimes with them, and sometimes forgetting them; sometimes present among His worshippers to hear them, and sometimes elsewhere, and deaf to them; sometimes doing by His ordinances that for which His ordinances were appointed, and sometimes disregarding His ordinances. Oh! most unworthy thought of Thee, blessed and adorable Lord Jesus! who art with Thy Church always, unto the end of the world; who in Thy love art bending still over this rebellious earth, and having Thy delights with the sons of men; who forsookest us not for so much as *one* hour, when it was at the cost to Thee of sorrow and suffering, of tears and crying unutterable, until Thou hadst reconciled us by Thy death; now that Thou art exalted at Thy Father's right hand, dost Thou leave this poor Church of Thine to speak words for Thee, and to do acts for Thee,

without Thy presence and in vain: or is it, as it were, but occasionally, when other calls interfere not, or perhaps when some mightier, more piercing cry cometh up into Thine ear from this scene of our misery, out of these depths of our mortality, that Thou rememberest Thy Church, and comest forth to do Thy part in Thy gracious ordinances!

Let not our hearts think thus of the Son of God. Let us think truly of the true and living God. Is not He the Faithful *one?* Does not He keep covenant, true to all His appointments, living in each of His ordinances? Said He ever to any one, "Seek ye My face in vain?" Our God is a present God. His ordinances are His, although to men's hands be given the ministration of them. Never is His name pronounced on earth that He knoweth it not in heaven. Never do His ministers minister in His name that He is not present for that unto which they minister.

The eunuch wished to be baptized. Philip said unto him, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest, and he was baptized. Was not Jesus present in that baptism? Did not He thereby give that man eternal life, and make him a son of God? No one doubts it. And he went on his journey rejoicing: glorifying God with an offering of thanksgiving and praise, as every baptized man ought to do.

The centurion saw a vision, and invited Peter; and as Peter was preaching, the Holy Ghost came upon all them that heard. And forthwith they were baptized. Did not Jesus by that baptism

make these men the sons of God? Or was it perhaps one baptism to Cornelius, and another to one of Cornelius's little children; efficacious to himself, but inoperative to one of his domestics? Did Jesus act in it variously to each member of that company?

But you say, that eunuch spake and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." I made no such confession when I was baptized. Very true. But were you not brought unto Jesus? Were you not given unto Him? Did He say unto you, "Thou hast not come unto Me, thou hast but been brought to Me," and did He therefore send thee empty away? Is not He Himself the creator of all things; Himself the fashioner of that wonderful framework of human life, by which men are all made parts of one another, dependent upon one another? Had He not, without consulting thy will, bound up thy fortunes, temporal and eternal, with those parents by whom He called thee into being; and shall He not honour their will in bringing thee unto Him for eternal welfare, and for dedication unto Him, as much as He would have honoured thy will, if it could have been exercised? Was not He Himself, in the days of His humiliation, indebted to His human parent for His presentation in the temple? Was Christianity introduced for breaking up the existing unities of human life, or for *acknowledging* them all, and using them all for highest ends, sanctifying them, crowning them with the highest of all unities, that of Christ and His Church, that of God and

the sons of God? Yea, surely for retaining them every one, gathering them together; and first, most of all, that the child and the parent might stand to God in the same covenant, might be one, as in all other things, so in the common participation of the divine nature.

But you say, where is the evidence of the efficacy of baptism? Do you wish for sensible, intellectual evidences of a spiritual fact? Suppose you have them, shall sense or intellect judge of a spiritual fact? But you reply, "where are the fruits?" Consider now. We are speaking of life, and you will not believe in its presence unless you see its fruits, its operations. Does not life always precede the manifestation of life? Every man is first a small infant, with no evidence of life but a light breathing, a feeble cry. He cannot speak, he cannot see, he cannot reason, he cannot understand reasoning. Yet he is as truly a man as the king who is sitting upon his throne; as truly alive as he shall be years afterwards, perhaps himself ruling over men. As truly alive, and yet on how many things does it hang, whether that life shall ever act or be manifested to men! What if an unnatural mother forget his cry, and refuse him nourishment out of her own body? What if an unfaithful nurse stifle his little breath, and quench that small spark of vitality that is in him? He has existed, but the world for which he was made shall never be aware of his existence. What if in maturer years he shew a spirit of perverseness and self-will; if he refuse the restrictions of

prudence, and contravene the lessons of nature and human experience; shall he not sink down a ruined thing, a man, yet a man undone, and worse than if he had never been born?

So every *spiritual* man is first an infant, and all he can do is to desire the sincere milk of the word that he may grow thereby. He is a babe, and must be fed on milk. But he is alive, yea, he is a son of God, for all that. You are a grown man, and you live upon strong meat, and you think nothing of the feeble ones who cannot eat of your strong meat. Well, if you *are* able to eat strong meat, give God thanks for it, and do the works and bring forth the fruits of a strong man. But say not that the babe is not a living man. You acknowledge that the life of God that is in you is given you by Jesus Christ, freely, irrespectively of your acts, thoughts, and deservings. You confess that in you it was prior to its fruits, at a time when no fruits of it gave evidence of its being there. Nay, you know that your own baptism has something to do with it, and that if you had not been baptized that life would not have been in you. *And* you believe not of another baptized person, that eternal life is in him, because you see no actings or fruits of it; or, perhaps, because you see the acts and fruits of an unbridled triumphant flesh? Are you not, then, partial and unequal in your judgments? Are your fruits, then, so convincingly sufficient to prove that you are the children of God? Does God see so vast a difference between you and your despised neighbour?

If you go about to establish your sonship upon such evidence as this, see that you have evidence enough. And see, lest there be in you a narrow heart, seeking to shew that your brother is not, though failing to prove that you yourselves are, born of God. But the life of God has its beginnings; and the beginnings are the promise of the end, but not the certainty of it. The babe is a man-child, but he may never be a grown man. What if the hind forsake her calf in the field, because she has no grass? Shall not her calf perish? What if the Church forsake her children, because her own spiritual food is cut off? Shall not her children perish? Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. But if there be a famine of hearing the word of the Lord, shall not a spiritual man languish, decay, and perhaps die? Has not God given His sons unto His Church to care for? Is not there in His Church teaching for them, feeding, counsel, defence, guidance—milk for the babes, strong meat for them that have their senses exercised to discern good and evil? But if the Church is of little faith, and questions whether they that are committed to her *be* children of God or not, and goes about to seek life for those whom she ought to feed as already alive; if she does not in faith teach them the language of God's house, and exercise and stimulate their little members and faculties, and encourage them to use their spiritual senses in perceiving God their Father, and in becoming acquainted with the

divine realities that invite their faith on every side; if she does not call forth the thanksgiving, and the love, the attention and reverence, the listening for God's voice, which the Holy Ghost, who is given to them, is ready to shew forth in them; if the Church do not lead their inexperienced choice, teaching them *what* is to be taken as wholesome food, and what is to be avoided as poison, what will benefit them, and what will hurt them, how can their life prosper? How many thousand are the perils in the midst of which it is likely to be extinguished? They are compassed with evil, and are in the world which lieth in wickedness; and alluring pollutions are, by men and by the devil, presented to them; and a cross galling to mortal flesh presses upon them, and they fall under it seven times a day; and in this life they have no hope; and they can only groan and "wait for the redemption." And if they be not told that they are sons of God nothwithstanding; and instructed to draw strength from their baptism by faith, as out of one of the wells of salvation; and made to know that they *have* power in Jesus Christ to overcome; if they be not encouraged, and comforted, their hands lifted up when they hang down, and their feeble knees strengthened; what shall become of them, how shall that precious life, that is so hunted for, escape? It has sunk among these perils, and you say it was never there. The babe has been famished by the negligence of an unnatural mother, and you say it never was alive.

Jesus gave the life, and He commanded it to be

fed; and He gave all the ordinances through which it *should* be fed, and called forth, and encouraged, and directed, and matured. And there stood first and nearest among these spiritual ordinances, the father and the mother; and the parents have been unfaithful to their own child, and have left its eternal life uncared for, and have stood between it and its Saviour. They have led it into the ways that have been forsworn, instead of the ways of pleasantness and peace. They have trained it to the world's vanities, instead of teaching it to draw water out of the wells of salvation. They have prompted it with the promptings of fleshly life, and not with those of the Holy Ghost. The babe, with its heavenly deposit, has come among strangers and foreigners, even in being committed to its own natural father and mother; and the precious deposit has become hid in dust; and you see nothing but the dust, the sinful flesh: and you say, what hath his baptism done for him? Yea, rather what might it not have done, but for the unbelief and wickedness of the very parents who should have been the first to call forth its fruits? The parent thinks of God, and is troubled; this trouble he instils into that child who otherwise would have confided in God and been filled with thanksgiving; and he also thinks of God, and is troubled. The parent is afraid of God, and is hiding himself from God, and he infects that child with the same fear. He makes that child to accustom itself to be afraid of God. And when it is accustomed to that, even before its powers

are so far quickened as to think of a reason for fearing, of guilt and divine anger, then the condition of a guilty conscience seems to it natural, not intolerable. Hence, putting off of repentance; hence, ever diminishing tenderness of conscience, diminishing abhorrence of sin; hence, quenching of the Holy Ghost, who calls to return; hence, accumulation of unrepented sins, defilement, hopelessness, desperateness, and that gulf and sink of evil in which we live in these days in our Christian cities and nations.

It is most true that baptism saves us not without our faith, for it is an act of God upon us, and it profits us by faith. God confers upon us a condition and a gift. He makes us members of His Christ, and bestows upon us a life that is in Him. So soon as we are capable of exercising faith, we are to exercise faith in Christ, and so to abide in Him. Abiding in Him by faith, we partake of His life. Faith uses all the ordinances—not one, nor some, but all. It uses baptism. It uses the teachers, the guides, and all the ordinances by which the body is held to the head, and by which grace from the head proceeds to all parts of the body. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, says our Lord. But it is not he that comes to Him once, and goes away again. It is he that comes to Him to abide with Him, to hear Him always, to be guided by Him always, always to obey Him, and to cleave unto Him in love eternally. We have been brought unto Him; and God has done an act upon us. He has joined us

unto His Son. But it is not a physical union, such as our will has no control over. The continuance of it is entirely dependent upon our will. It is a union by the Holy Ghost: and through our faith does the Holy Ghost preserve that union. It shall be to all eternity the fact, that we *were* united unto Christ; but we shall *continue* to be one with Christ, if we delight in that fact, and believe in Him to whom we have been united. We may cease to be His, but we can never undo the truth that once we were His. It is the Father's will, that of all whom He hath given Him He should lose none, but should raise it up at the last day. And He came to do His Father's will. In the volume of the book it was written of Him, "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God." And the will of the Holy Ghost is, to be there where the Father and the Son have sent Him. And we, who have been brought unto holy baptism, are compassed with that threefold will, that threefold, yet united will. And is that will not absolute, omnipotent? Is there yet another will, without whose assent, without whose constant, continuous, enduring assent, that will of the divine persons shall not execute itself? Most surely. In each man his own will is sacred. God counts it sacred. He worketh all salvation, but He worketh in no man beyond the faith of that man. He asks not of us the services of bondmen. Men have a perception of this, Christian men I mean, and therefore they rise up and plead against all interferences with the liberty of conscience. Indeed, brethren, there is

a line, a border within which every man must occupy for himself, and which he must jealously keep from all intruders. There is a region within which is concentrated a man's own, individual, unshared responsibility. A man who gives that up, ceases to be a man. He becomes either a priest-ridden dotard, or a follower of men, tossed with the winds of doctrine; or a man with a familiar spirit. Christianity was not given to supersede this sacred possession of every man, but rather to reveal it, to shew its sacredness, and to enlarge its exercise. And the use of all law, counsel, instruction, is not to teach men to lean upon other men who can tell the law, and give the counsel and instruction, but to stir up and enable them, with the greater jealousy, confidence, and security, to occupy, in an increasingly wide sphere of action, their own undevolved responsibility. Men are of various natural characters. Some are independent—strong as the oak, and upright as the cedar; some are bending as the willow, feeble as the rush, unstable as water. But there is in them all this ultimate limit, this citadel of their individuality, which, if they surrender to any person, or to any institution, they are not merely weak men, or unstable men, but they cease to be men. And God Himself does not act, so as to cause any one to cease to be a man. And therefore He first loves us, and then commands us to love Him. He first reveals to us His counsels and His acts from everlasting, and then says to us, "*Give* Me thine heart." He comes to

us with blessing, and waits that we may *accept* it. He gives unto us eternal life, yet makes our living dependent upon our faith: unites us unto Christ, yet leaves our abiding in Him dependent upon the exercise of our will through faith.

I have already remarked that, in the case of infants, the continuance and development of their natural life depends on the fidelity of those on whose care they are cast. I have said the same of the divine life which is bestowed in baptism. But afterwards life depends upon the will and good conduct of the individual. If he is industrious, moderate, uses his body according to nature, and gives it the nourishment that is provided for him, he shall live. And so the eternal life that is in us depends upon our will and conduct. If we continue to believe in Jesus Christ, if we give thanks to Him; if we seek His ways; if we listen to Him; if we acknowledge ourselves to be His and not our own; if we tenderly answer to all the suggestions and movements of the Holy Ghost; if we use all the spiritual faculties that He has conferred upon us, and by His Spirit offer unto Him all our natural faculties and affections; if we wait upon Him in all His ordinances, whether they be pastors, rulers, guides, worship, sacraments; if we hold secret communion with Him in the chambers of our own spirits, and cause our cry to ascend in His ear in our closets; if we grieve not the Holy Ghost by rebelliousness, nor vex Him with pollutions and uncleanness; if we eat of His bread and drink of the cup which

Jesus hath blessed: then our life shall grow and flourish.

But if we are indifferent and lukewarm, without spiritual industry, and will labour only for the meat that perisheth; if we will think nothing of our blessed relationship to God, or of those divine persons, and those divine wills by which our eternal unity with the Son of God is made certain in every respect save one—the consent of our believing wills; if we will silence the whisperings of the Holy Ghost, or prefer the suggestions of our own imaginations, or the words of a wicked world, to the words and statutes, the counsels and revelations of God; if we will subject our will to other men's will, or our spirits to the appetites of the flesh and the mind; if we will disregard our spiritual guides, and acknowledge no subjection to them in the Lord; if we will forget to call on Him in secret, or restrain prayer before Him; if we will turn our backs upon God's ordinances, and neglect *that* one in especial, in which we can eat the bread that came down from heaven: shall that blessed life prosper? Shall it not dwindle away and seem to perish, and to be as though it had never been?

Do you think it can be as though it had never been? Is a baptized man who lives as a heathen man just the same as a heathen man? At their latter end shall they be alike? Oh! no. Have you read your parables so loosely as not to know that the judgment of the world and the judgment of Christendom are two very different things?

You have hid your talent in the earth, for you believed not God. You have hid your talent in the earth; and you have forgotten that it was ever committed to you. But it is not forgotten of the great Master, the Lord who gave it. Nor has He forgotten the purpose for which it was entrusted to your management. It is His, and He shall require it with usury. He cometh to require it at your hand. Shall you then say, "we have no money of Thine to restore, for we never received any?" The slothful servant in the parable could not plead any such defence; nor shall you when the judgment comes. You shall not be able then to use any of your false doctrines, your lying philosophies, and your abstractions, in that day when stern realities encompass you. You shall be constrained to confess all His words to be true and His judgment to be just. You shall know that you had a talent, in that day when your talent is taken from you.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON XIV.

THE PASSION OF OUR BLESSED LORD.

ISAIAH liii. 2-5.

"He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

THIS day[1] is, in the custom of a large part of the Church, called good. And it is well so named; because it is the day of the expiation of the sins of the whole world—the day of the reconciliation of that breach which sin had made. Good, by reason of that goodness of God which was on this day evidenced, in His not sparing His own well beloved Son, but giving Him unto death for us all. Good, by reason of the goodness which it then became possible for God to pour out eternally upon man, and because of the goodness which it

[1] Preached on Good Friday.

then became possible for Him to develope in man, and to exhibit through means of him.

Equally well is it entitled, in other parts of the Church, the Care Friday, or the Friday of sorrow; for on this day we recall to our minds the incomprehensible death of Him who is God. We contemplate the prevailing of death against Him who had united Himself to us—against the innocent one, because He had in love taken upon Him the flesh of the guilty. We contemplate the death or deadness of all men, in that one died for all. We behold our own hatefulness and our own ruin. We enter into the feelings of those who thought that it was He who should have redeemed Israel. We see with them, in the cutting off of the Son of God, the burial of all hopes of human recovery. This day we, as it were, remember nothing of the resurrection. The hope of it was still in the breast of Jesus alone.

Let us see that we lose not the benefit of that good work. Let us not refuse to afflict our hearts. Let us endeavour that this day be a good day for us—such goodness as in this world must ever have deadly sorrow for its companion, and a crown of thorns for its reward, by following Him who hath gone before, leaving us an example, that we should, according to our measure, walk in His steps; the example, I mean, of being one with all men, yet walking with God—the example of refusing no man, casting off none, but carrying them in His bosom, and exhausting every drop of that sorrow which their sin had made inevitable.

For this purpose let us meditate for a little the great fact which was on this day transacted on the face of this earth; and to the end that we may meditate reverently so unfathomable a mystery—reverently and according to truth—not with fleshly sympathies, but with spiritual understanding and appreciation, and with spiritual fruit in our own souls, let us humbly ask God to be present with us, and to grant us His help.

That was a wonderful word that came from the mouth of the Son of God, when He said, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me, nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done:" and equally remarkable is the answer which He received to that prayer; for it came not as a voice from heaven, of acknowledgment and sanction, such as that which greeted Him on His ascending out of the waters of baptism, nor as a few days before, when He prayed that His Father would glorify His own name, and when the people said it thundered; not thus, but in the ministering of an angel, that appeared unto Him from heaven to strengthen Him. Strength was ministered to His faith, and strength to His will, to abide in its purpose; but no comfort of hope that His petition might be granted, or that the eternal counsels of the Most High might be changed. Being strengthened with this strength, He entered on His agony, and prayed more earnestly; so that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground; and to this prayer no

answer is then sent, either in voice or in work, or even in ministry of angels. They are the unanswered prayers of God's own Son; and from them we learn, as by the most striking of all possible examples, how even the highest human faith is unable to apprehend the full character of God's will, or the unchangeableness of that eternal law of which all God's actings are the exposition.

That was the hour of the trial of the Son of man's obedience; shewing how hard a thing man's sin had made obedience to become, and how that death, which had been threatened by God at the first as the fruit of Adam's disobedience, had now become the sure reward of the obedient one at the hands of men. That, I say, was the hour of His trial; of the trial of His will and purpose; of the trial of His love and of His resolution to redeem; of the trial of His obedience and submission; and of His mind being to redeem only in God's way. He then looked at His whole undertaking, and, as it were, weighed it, while as yet He might recede, and leave the world to perish; or, while as yet a way might be imagined for its redemption, that would spare the weak flesh. It was the hour of His *trial*. The purpose and will, indeed, of His whole life had been separation and dedication to God, and it had brought its natural accompaniment, the world's estrangement,—opposition from all that was strong in the world. But now His dedication of Himself to the service for which His Father had sent Him into the world was to be

proved how far it would go. He was found in fashion as a man, and it was to be proved whether, being so found, He would be obedient so far as death[1]—even until death should be consummated. It must be shewn to be no exhibition but a real labour: no didactic pantomime for the display of the divine character, but a labour so real as to wring prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, from the Son of God, unto Him that was able to save Him from death; no effort of human sentiment, but of divine love; no wilful undertaking, but a delighting in the will of God, a persevering to delight in it even when it was His Father's will that the cup of sorrow should not pass from Him, but that He should exhaust the last drop of it. Now, the struggle was in the region of the creature's heart. This was the hour of the actual *willing* sacrifice, in which He delivered Himself up before He was delivered up of another; in which He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheek to them that plucked off the hair, before any came against, or ventured to approach Him. To spare Himself was still possible. Immediately afterwards He was in the hands of His enemies. He had delivered up Himself, and then God had delivered Him up, and man received power against Him. Their hour was given them by God, and the power of darkness was admitted to execute its worst. The sword was commanded by God to awake against His shepherd, and against the man that was His

[1] μέχρι θανάτου.

fellow. The accomplishment was *come forth* from God of all that was written concerning Him in the psalms and the prophets. The cup was no longer future but present. The mental anguish of anticipation was exchanged for the actual bowing down of the weak man, whom man deserted, and whom God forsook; His struggle and His bowing down before the envy and meanness, the injustice and cruelty of the honourable of the earth; before the savage cry of the crowd, who but five days ago had sung "Hosannah to the son of David," before the scorn and the brutality of the soldiers. Then followed the shame of the worst malefactor's execution, and the triumph of death over Him, whom till now all nature had obeyed, to whose word all matter and all spirit had rendered instant homage.

This was what He met with, who said, "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God." The ordinances of the eternal God could not be superseded even for the exercise of the divine philanthropy; could not be relaxed even at the cry of the well-beloved Son of God, or to spare Him from one drop of His mysterious sufferings. It could not be, for God willed it not. It could not be, for through obedience He also did not will it.

Now, for the full apprehension of that which is before us, it is to be remembered that in our blessed Lord there were two wills. By which I do not mean two inclinations, or that in Him

there was a will that was at one with God's will, and another will that was contrary to it, and that strove against it; but, that one was the very will of God, the immutable will of God; the other the creature will, the will of a man, free to good and to evil, complying with the will of God, as in any other man, only through obedience, through submission, through acknowledgment of a superior, through self-denial and saying of God that He was His God. This creature will it was which by the Holy Ghost was sustained in obedience. It was with this will that He offered Himself without spot unto God. The Holy Ghost was that eternal Spirit through which He so offered Himself. For the guidance of this human will He needed a man's faith. For this, He was of the Holy Ghost fully instructed in the Scriptures, and enabled to believe in them. For this, faith shed a light on all the dark steps of His path. Chiefly for Him, of all men, were the Old Testament scriptures written, that He might love God's law, and that it might be His meditation all the day. Through them He grew in wisdom. They revealed to Him Himself and His own mission, and His objects, the things He should suffer, and the glory that should follow. They revealed to His human mind the character of God and His purpose. They also made known to Him the character of man whom He came to save, of that flesh which He had assumed, as it had proved itself in all men, even in the saints and the friends of God who had prefigured Him. He needed not that any

should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. The Spirit of Christ, who spake in the prophets, and in the psalms, and in the law, had prepared in them the materials of the faith of Jesus; yea, and the materials of His devotion. Were not the psalms written for Him? Did He not use them? He found them the truest, fullest forms in which to think of God, in which to speak unto God, even for the last exclamations on the cross. Through the Holy Ghost the Scriptures were plain to Him. Being twelve years old, He sat in the midst of the doctors in the temple, both hearing them and asking them questions, and the doctors in the temple were astonished at His wisdom and answers. Already, at that tender age, He had learned more than they all about His Father's business, and this through means of the holy Scriptures.

Thus then, I say, His human will was lifted up into accordance with the will of God. By this will it was that He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. Through this will was the alternative presented to Him, of that cup passing away from Him otherwise than by drinking it. By the stedfast subjection of that will through the Holy Ghost, He met that suffering wherewith the sin of man had paved the way by which those things should be attained which He proposed to Himself.

Through the divine love to man, in the concert of purpose of the divine Persons, the Son undertook the reconciliation of man. Through the

divine love to man, the Son became incarnate, and taking to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul, with the parts, passions, and affections of a creature, and besides, with that feebleness and mortality to which the human creature had become subject through the fall, He added to His former mode of personal action the mode of personal action through a human will. And so, being found in fashion as a man, by the human will He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. With that human will, from day to day, and unto the end, He submitted to the Father, and consented to do and to suffer those things of which He had become capable by becoming man. In His humanity, by the action of His human will, He consented to be forsaken of His Father: He consented to be denied, neglected, let fall. That is the very meaning of perfect sacrifice. He who saved others saved not Himself. His divinity interposed not to make insensible His humanity, or to spare it. He did not call for the twelve legions of angels whom He might have had. In His human will He submitted to this forsaking and delivering up. As He turned not away from the disciple's kiss, though He knew that it was the traitor's sign, so He consented that His Father's countenance should be changed toward Him, and that He should be pleased to put Him to grief. He did this as the obedient man. He did it because thus alone could the counsels of the divine love be executed. He, the same person, was counselling for man's reconcilia-

tion in the eternal purpose; and the same person was now trusting in God, believing in that counsel as it had been revealed to men, yielding to that counsel through obedience, submitting to it, and at length voluntarily sinking through human weakness under a superhuman load. He was God who suffered; He was God who died: but the suffering and the death came through the consent and obedience of the man. And in that obedience He persevered until able to say, "It is finished," uncontradicted by the accuser, uncontradicted by God. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken."

Well did the prophet say, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams;" as it is written also in the psalms, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, a body Thou hast prepared for Me." And we have shewn how through incarnation of the Son of God that obedience was introduced, which being persevered in so far as even to enter into and to pass through death, that is, even unto its utmost possible limit, hath sanctified us "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God," is the established method of the

reconciliation of the world, the substitute and the fulfilment of all other means. And how perfect a means that is, and how fully our blessed Lord did make satisfaction for all flesh, was made manifest, in that God, who spared Him not from death, did yet for His righteousness visit Him in the tomb, and give life to that offered body, even an eternal life; and so raised that flesh again, the first-fruits of the eternal redemption, which it had been the instrument of procuring; and exalting it to be for evermore a sharer of the glory of the Son of God, made it further the instrument of union and channel of eternal life unto thousands and millions, in whom, as the mystical—not personal—body of Christ, that obedience might for evermore be spread and perpetuated, with its blessed results and incalculable wonders, through all bounds of creation and of eternity.

"Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God." That was the key to the whole life of our blessed Lord, the man Christ Jesus. His thoughts, His words, His acts, His endurance, circulate around that central idea. And the clause, "Thy law is within my heart," teaches us the manner in which that mind was in Him; not by any force or virtue of His human nature itself, but by the gift of God. As it is written concerning the new covenant, of which the eighty-ninth psalm is the poetical, prophetical celebration, [1] "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their

[1] Jer. xxxi. 33.

inward parts, and write it in their hearts;" and in the fortieth psalm our Lord speaks of this as one of the gracious thoughts of God towards man, and of His many wonderful works—namely, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God in the heart of man, the living law, the law of the spirit of life.

We have arrived, then, at the link in our discourse which brings us from the meditation of our Lord to the consideration of ourselves, His people, who are left to follow Him, to obey as He did, to carry on the continuous work of God, and to fill up the measure of His sufferings. That link is our Lord in His flesh the first receiver of the grace of the new covenant. And as to this, that we may avoid misconceptions, let it be remembered, (1) that He was the Son of God by being of the essence of God, eternally begotten, not by grace, favour, will, or counsel of God—while we are sons of God by grace only, by adoption; (2) that the Holy Ghost proceeded upon Him in His conception and abode with Him for ever, not through any intermediate channel or distributor, but immediately and directly from God—whereas that gift of the new covenant comes upon us only through a mediator, the man Jesus Christ, and comes upon us, and abideth with us, only in virtue of our union with Him, and our abiding in Him, who alone *possesseth* the Holy Ghost. By the Holy Ghost He in His own person, without a mediator, did in the flesh the will of God; and now by the Holy Ghost He, as Mediator, accom-

plishes the will of God in all those persons who are members of His body. By these two remarks I do not mean to say that Jesus was, as man, above the ordinances of God, or that the ordinances of God were not to Him, as to any other man, means of that grace which descended upon Him; for we know that He was circumcised, that He was presented in the temple, that He was baptized, and that He kept the appointed feasts; but I mean that in all our faith of His perfect unity with man by His incarnation, and of the identity of all His human conditions and experiences with our own—sin and an unclean conscience alone excepted—there must ever remain the immeasurable, incomprehensible distance between us and Him; so that we must adore as God Him whom we commiserate as man; we must worship as our Creator Him whom we lay hold upon as our brother, bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh.

Let us, therefore, now turn and consider our position in the light of His position, our duty in the light of His dutifulness, our trial in the light of His, and from His death stir up ourselves to the life of self-denial and sacrifice in which we are called to follow Him. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and

hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Such was His mission, and ours, in its kind—a mission into the world of which we form a part; each one of us stored according to our measure with part of the fulness of God, stored with part of the riches of Christ; by our faithful use of which the world may know that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world—by our faithful use of which the love of God may be revealed to men. And the world we are sent into is not the world in general, but it is the men and women among whom we live: the men and women whom we see, with whom we converse, with whom we traffic, who see us, and who hear our voice. Of some of us the sphere is naturally larger, of some officially larger. But let the measure be larger or smaller, the world is the thing we see, not that which is absent, not that which is future, but that in which we are. There should our light shine, and the odour exhale of that unction which we have received from the Holy One.

And our Lord's strength was that He and His Father are one. And ours, that He is one with us, and we one with Him. One, not in the sense that an individual man is one with the Son of God, but that the Church is one with Him, and each man being a member of His Church, which is His body, is one with Him. Unity with Him is our strength, but it is a common unity. A man who is not abiding in unity with the Church need not boast of being united to Jesus. The Holy Ghost, through whom that unity exists, unites the

individual by uniting the body. By His power, the man on earth and the Lord who is locally at the right hand of God are united, but through the visible union with the visible Church. The Holy Ghost comes not as a *private spirit* to a private man, but as the common gift to him who embraces the common thing to which the gift is given. Nor are we joined unto the Lord through an ubiquity of His Godhead, but through His Church, where and when we find it, and through the Church's ministry of the sacraments. We abide in the vine, not by being vines, but by being branches.

And being sent, what did He? From day to day He went about shewing the heart of God, speaking the truth of God, not making occasions, but as occasions were found: first for thirty years an obedient son, a patient expecter of God's time; then, after His baptism, receiving those whom His Father brought and gave to Him, giving unto them to know the secrets of the kingdom of God —sparing the rest by speaking to them in parables. And in the meanwhile, as He walked to and fro, and looked upon the ruins and miseries of His creatures, beginning at Nazareth where He had been brought up, He refused no petition, He loosed such bonds as men could feel the weight of, He healed them that had need of healing, He preached the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. But He refused to bring forth all His treasures; He observed for everything its season and its time. He would not

be taunted by His *brethren* into shewing Himself openly. When He knew that His time was come that He should go again unto His Father, *then* He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. And we—we may at least be that patient and obedient fulfiller of the common duties of human life, which He hath made honourable by His fulfilling them. We may do good as we find occasion. And if any higher calling than the duties of ordinary life do lie upon us, we may be ready to fulfil its higher duties also, when we can do so in faith and in charity, and can refuse to the taunts of our brethren to act out of God's way and out of God's time. The more we have from God, the more we need to condescend to men. The mightier we are in God, we must spare the more —the more merciful we need to be.

That which He did He did as to substance, as to manner, and time, because of the mind that was in Him, the mind to be obedient until death. Let this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus, the obedient mind, whose meat it is to do the will of His Father—not *to do* merely, which is the mind of the hot, intemperate, heady, and impatient, but to do the *will* of Him who sent Him. Inclination will never keep a man in the commandments of God. Nothing short of faith and obedience will. To like is not to love, although it resemble it. It is he that loveth that keepeth the commandments. So, by the obedient mind, we shall be the sons of God without rebuke.

And we know what *He* met with, who was thus dutiful to Him who sent Him. The light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. He, the truth, seeing all things truly, walked about in the midst of falsehood and hypocrisy, the secret thoughts of men discerned by Him—their throats an open sepulchre, their members instruments of sin, every man destroying himself in his own way, and helping the destruction of others. He saw the scriptures fulfilling all around Him by the acts of His unconscious creatures, even to His being Himself numbered with the transgressors. Disappointment met Him. Refusal by those whom God had sent Him to help, whom He devoted Himself to help. All day long He stretched out His hand to a disobedient and rebellious people. Among the best He found only an ignorance that was able to take in no instruction; a fleshliness that could not see a spiritual goal or enlarge itself beyond the common ken of a narrow-minded generation; a selfishness that would fight for pre-eminence and speculate upon honourable places in the kingdom to come. Among the rest, His miracles of kindness and of charity only awakening greed, not even gratitude, still less faith. Yet all endured, borne with, waited for, hope outliving all discouragement. Being declared faultless by a heathen judge, His life was demanded by His own chosen people. The heathen trembled at His name, "the Son of God." Yet His laying claim to it only made the Jews the more easily discover a law by which they

might put Him to death. He chose twelve men who were the companions of His wanderings, the witnesses of His miracles, who knew His holy life, and who had received in the ear the secrets of His kingdom, nay, who themselves had preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; who themselves, through His name, had power over all the power of the adversary. Yet one of them proved to be a devil, and was a thief, and sold Him for a few pieces of silver; another swore that he never knew Him; the rest befriended Him not even with their presence; the very beloved one only gazed. Their faith was gone, their understanding had been impenetrable to His instructions, their memory had lost all His forewarnings, His prophesyings of His approaching end had been unheeded. And yet He was *not* disappointed, nor turned His back, but forgiving all that would accept forgiveness, He prayed for the men by whose wicked hands He was crucified and slain.

And now are we left on the earth: and as God was manifested through the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh, so is God now by Jesus Christ manifested through our flesh. And are we expecting other treatment or a readier acceptance than He met with? Shall we hide ourselves among those who receive us, and there speak together of our common treasures till they become a profane thing in our eyes, or shall we go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach? And if we go; if we do live among

men as He did, because He came to do the will of God; if we be really *in Him and He in us*, shall our path be anywise different from His?

Let not this duty, however, of being in the world though redeemed from it be any excuse with which those may quench the voice of conscience who toy and dally with the world, who would reconcile God to the world, and not the world to God. They indeed lay up for themselves the bitterest sorrows, the blankest of all disappointments. The world will spue them out, and the Lord will disavow them. Let us be in the world as *He* was. Let His light be in our spirits, and beam from us. Shall not many bless us, and they that bless us forsake us also, and deny us and cast us out? Yes; the more Christ is in us the more it shall be thus. Are you disappointed that your messengers go far away and bring with them no triumphs, no spiritual victories? Oh! foolish and unreflecting, should not they also stretch forth their hands all the day long to a disobedient and rebellious people? Or shall you be amazed and confounded if the standard-bearers faint, and the zealous ones swear that they never knew you? Shall we now rise up, after all that experience of our Lord in the earth, a new generation of foolish men, and expect anything from the flesh, from our own flesh, or from that of any other men? Jesus was not astonished at man's reception of Him, for He knew what was in man. But by patience He recovered all; by pardoning, by bearing their sins;

by covering with divine charity, by hope in God. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Let us in like manner not be amazed, or confounded, or disappointed, but go on. Having been baptized into His death, let us quietly meet the fellowship of His sufferings. Through such tribulations it is that we must enter into the kingdom of God.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON XV.

THE RESURRECTION.

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 20, 21, 22, 55, 56, 57.

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. * * * * O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

OVER the tomb of Jesus, in the eyes of all men, rested hoplessness, the extinction of hope. Death has prevailed over the Son of God; who then shall escape from it? Some had thought that this was He who should have redeemed Israel, but the grave has swallowed Him up. Sorrow and disappointment take hold of them; they sorrow as those who have no hope; and the world, which hated Him because He was holy, triumphs; for they have prevailed against Him. Their judgment of Him has been right. God has not befriended Him; God has not delivered Him; God has not delighted in Him. We put Him to death for His blasphemies. Our sentence was just, for

God interfered not to hinder its execution. They believe their own lie—that He was a deceiver—now more firmly than ever. But to secure themselves against the possible deceit of His followers, they seal the stone, and set a watch.

They make themselves as secure as men can make themselves against almighty God, but in vain; for early on the third day the earth quakes and gives up its dead. He is not there, for God has visited Him, and brought Him forth, notwithstanding man's hopelessness, against all oppositions and securities of men. He saved not Himself, but God saved Him. When He had first descended, God brought Him up. He rose from the dead, and became the first-fruits of them that slept.

All Jerusalem is asleep and is silent. The busy life of man therein, which had returned to its wonted course after the tumults of that strange sacrifice of the Son of God, is hushed. Labour, care, pleasure, thought, conscience itself, are overpowered by sleep. None watch, but the few disappointed, ashamed, sorrowful disciples. Even *they* know not what God is going to do. Even they know not when He does it. The soldiers keep their watch, anxious about nothing, expecting nothing; the watches of a second night are past, and nothing has occurred to disturb or alarm them. But suddenly an angel descends from heaven, and they become as dead men. They behold nothing further. They know not what takes place. But the angel rolls away the stone

from that tomb. And He comes forth. And He was seen only of His friends. He was in the city, yet none of the city saw Him. Some, indeed, of the saints arose, and they appeared unto many. But none saw *Him.* He was in the midst of them, but they saw Him not. For more than forty days they heard no more of Him or of His doctrine. They only heard some report concerning His body, that it was stolen when the soldiers slept. The living world was all unconscious of that great thing that had come to pass. God had done a mighty act. He had done what He had spoken of. He had done what Jesus had predicted. He had done what the rulers tried to prevent. He had done it close by their city, in the very scene where it was to be looked for. Yet no man saw it or knew of it.

During forty days He shewed Himself to His disciples; first of all to the women, whose love had brought them early to the tomb with spices and ointments; then to that disciple who had thrice denied Him; then to the rest, even those who had forsaken Him and fled. To all others He was invisible. But He was seen of *them;* He conversed with them; He ate and drank in their presence. He found them doubting, disbelieving. Yet, whensoever He appeared unto them, His words were, "Peace be unto you." That was the preface to all He said. And He opened their understandings to understand the scriptures, and to see that it behoved the Messiah to suffer these things, and so to be made perfect.

Through love to man He had come down from heaven. Through love to man He had taken upon Him the form of a servant. Through love to man He had preached, and healed, and cast out devils, and raised the dead. Through love to man He had endured the death of the cross, and when He arose, having spoiled death and the grave, He came to men with the same love. He had despoiled death and the grave for their sakes. He died for our sins. He died the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God; that He might reconcile us unto God. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Man ate the fruit of the forbidden tree, and death entered into the world; but Jesus drank the cup, the fruit of the world's sin. He drank that cup, and it was death. This was the cup which man had mingled, and the Son of God drank of it, and He died. But He was visited with life, and declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. Out of love to men, and for men's sakes, He did this, that by one man's obedience many might be made righteous.

And when He arose and came to His disciples, His first words were, "Peace be unto you;" for He had made peace. God had made peace through the blood of His cross, that He might by Him reconcile all things unto Himself. He is our peace. He was about to bring many sons unto glory, and He laid the foundation of His work deep in the grave. He went down whithersoever man had gone, that He might lay there

the foundation of His work. His work was to bring men to God, and He began to bring them to God by making peace, and then by speaking peace to them. Men cannot come to God; men cannot think of God, unless peace can first be spoken to them. He made peace by dying for their sins; and He spoke the peace which He had made. Men cannot think of God unless they believe in that peace. Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are blotted out, and to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin. How shall man fear God aright? There is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared. Through the blood of Jesus Christ there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared. He hath consecrated for us a new and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh. Under the Old Testament there was a veil. It hid God from man; it separated men from God. But when He gave up the Ghost, that veil of the temple was rent in twain. The handwriting which was against man was taken away. The accusation that was against man was answered. And He rose again, because He had finished the atonement. He entered into peace. In coming into the world by the assumption of our nature, He had entered into the experience of the divine displeasure. He endured the hidings of His Father's countenance, until by death He had rent that veil. But when He arose, He entered into peace. He died unto sin once, but when He arose, He lived unto God. And His work was to unite us to Himself, and to present us unto God.

And He began that work by speaking the peace which He had made. He can present to God those who believe in the peace which He has made. And they to whom He spake personally after His resurrection, believed in that peace, and He was able to say to them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." They were reconciled unto God, and He could make them ambassadors for God. They were reconciled, and He could make them ambassadors of reconciliation. He spake peace to them, the peace which He had made by His cross, which He had bought with His own blood, and they believed in that peace, and He sent them to speak the same to all nations. For who can speak of God except he who is reconciled to God? Who can run for God but he that knows how God has loved him? Jesus spake peace because He had made peace, and His messengers spake the same because they believed in it, and had entered into it.

Those to whom our Lord spake peace after His resurrection, and who believed in it, became the Church. And they spake peace to all the world, beginning at Jerusalem. And His Church is the company of those, among whom He has spoken peace to hearing ears, among whom He is evermore speaking peace; and they are His witnesses in the earth, and speak peace unto all nations: as it is written, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings

of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Behold your God." The nations are hiding themselves from God, they cannot bear to behold Him. But He hath sent His Church into the midst of them to speak His peace, to invite them to behold their God, to shew them Jesus who died and rose again, that all the ends of the earth may look unto God and be saved.

"Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." He was made perfect, and became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. A new head was given to men; no longer he who sinned and who died, and who could minister unto men nought but sin and death; but the Holy One, who by death hath put away sin, and who lived again, and who could minister righteousness and eternal life to all them that believe and obey Him. And God hath put all things under His feet, and hath made Him head over all things for the Church, which is His body. And you have been joined unto Him; you have been made members of His body. As you were united to the first Adam by inheritance, so you have been united by the will of God to the second Adam who is the Lord from heaven. You inherited sin and death through your first parent, but righteousness and eternal life are the gift of God through Jesus Christ, unto whom you have been united under the gospel. The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

God has prepared a kingdom, and flesh and

blood cannot inherit it, for corruption cannot inherit incorruption. Jesus Himself took not His flesh into the kingdom of God, save through death and by the gate of resurrection. The natural body was sown in dishonour and weakness. His body was then raised from the dead, the same, yet spiritual—a spiritual body, such as He could take into the kingdom of God. And you are united unto Him—not unto Him with His corruptible and mortal body—but unto Him who has been changed, raised again, made alive, quickened with immortal life. The new creature began in Him. He took of the old creature, but He came forth from the grave changed in His manhood, the beginning of a new creation. And God hath joined you unto Him, and He hath quickened you who were dead in trespasses and sins. You belong to Him who has risen. The Father has given you to Him. He holds you for His Father, that He may work the works of God in you. And the power that He gives you is the power to follow His footsteps, that you may not live to the lusts of the flesh; that you may mortify your members which are on the earth; that by His cross the flesh in you may be put to death; that you may long for incorruption; that you may desire to be clothed upon with your house which is from heaven, and to receive that immortal body which *can* enter into the kingdom of God.

You have been joined unto Him that you may abide in Him. Abiding in Him you shall be saved. He saves all that abide in Him. He gives

you power to mortify the deeds of the body. He overcame; and God gives you the victory through Him. He overcame by faith, and He makes you overcome by faith. If you believe that Jesus died and rose again, you shall abide in Him, and you shall overcome all your enemies. You are reconciled unto God, and nothing shall separate you from God. Sin is that which separates from God; but He died for your sins, and in Him sin shall not prevail against you any more. He has said He will save you. And He knew you. He knew what was in you. He knew your flesh and its weakness, and its unprofitableness. He knew your enemies, and yet He undertook to save you. God has made Him a Prince and a Saviour. He highly exalted Him because of what He had done for you; and He gave unto Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father gave unto Him. He died for your sins, and rose again for your justification, that your flesh might not separate you from God; that your flesh with its sin and its death might no more separate you from God, but that grace might reign in you through righteousness unto eternal life. In Him you are dead unto sin, and alive unto God. You live not according to the infirmity of this mortal flesh with which you are encompassed, but according to the might of that immortal flesh which He carried with Him to the right hand of God. Your conversation is in heaven, for you are one with Him who is in heaven. You labour not for this world, because

you *have* a better inheritance. Your eyes are anointed to see Him who is invisible. You lay hold *now* on the hope set before you. You seek those things which are with Christ, where He sitteth at the right hand of God. That which He sees, He enables you also to behold, even the face of His Father, and the purpose of His Father, and the things which He is about to do. You see the resurrection and the glory, when our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto the body of His glory, according to the working of that mighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. By faith you anticipate that spectacle which the earth shall yet see, when Jesus, whom the heavens do presently contain, shall come forth again for the restitution of all things; when He shall be manifested again in the glory of His Father and of the holy angels; when the saints, who like you have believed in their unity with Him who died and rose again, shall be seen arrayed, under Him yet with Him, in that glorious incomprehensible unity, of which our present spiritual life is but a feeble, partial, clouded expression. You see these things, you meditate them, you hope for them, you lay hold of them; and for the joy set before you, you follow Him.

By the Holy Ghost, Jesus, who is at the right hand of God, enables them that believe in Him to behold such things as these. They are all written in the scriptures of truth. The purpose of God is revealed in the holy scriptures. But the fleshly eye cannot read it, cannot see these things there.

The Spirit who searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God—He revealeth them. Jesus calls those that believe in Him friends. He imparts to them His secret. That which He receives of the Father He declares unto them. He does not call them to the fellowship of His sufferings without lifting them into the fellowship of His hopes, or without shedding upon their hearts that love of God, by which, under His struggle, He was refreshed and sustained. He delighted in the will of God. He knew that God is love; and He makes them see that God is love, that they also may delight in His will. If you do not know that God is love, how can you delight in His will or meditate His purpose? His purpose may be good and gracious, but if you do not know that it is so, you will not meditate it, nor delight in it, nor give yourselves up to it. And therefore the beginning of the gospel of your salvation is that God hath loved you. That is what you first learn concerning God. Having learned that, you can delight in His will. God in His love put away your sins, and made in your hearts a clean abode for His Spirit. The sacrifices under the law cleansed not the conscience. The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ cleanseth the conscience. They took not away sin. The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ does take away sin. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. His resurrection was the evidence that sin had been put away. You believe in Him who died and rose again, and so you enter into peace, and have no more conscience of sins.

In Jesus you behold the face of God, and you know that He hath loved you. You can then read the scriptures with an honest heart, and learn all that is revealed there. The Holy Ghost works in that heart which the blood of Jesus hath sprinkled, and He anoints your eyes to see wonderful things in His word. Until your heart was so sprinkled, and your eyes were so opened, you *had* nothing but the world, and the flesh, and the devil. These were the things that you knew: you were at home with them; they compassed you; they were at your hand; you lived unto them. That was the life which you lived in the flesh. You lived in trespasses and sins, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. But now having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in you, you see other things. Satan has been overcome in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The flesh has been put to death by His cross. A new course of the world is about to be brought in at the day of the restitution of all things, when Jesus shall come again, and the kingdom of heaven shall be revealed. Your eyes are opened. You see what Stephen saw. You behold Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and about to come in the clouds of heaven. You see Him waiting, expecting, making intercession. He has gone into the holiest of all, and you are waiting for Him in the outer court. But your hope entereth within that

veil, and you expect Him to return again. He must finish that intercession in which He is engaged. By the power of that intercession the world is preserved, and the kingdoms of it, until the time come that is appointed for the revelation of *His* kingdom. He must finish that intercession; for the elect must be gathered out of all nations: and not one grain of wheat be lost of all that should come into God's garner. When He has finished that intercession the end shall come, because God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance in that He hath raised Him from the dead. These are the things in the faith of which you now stand, by the hope of which you are saved from day to day. Because of these you are able to follow your Lord, to crucify the flesh, to bear all things, and to keep the commandments of God. If you forget these things, His commandments immediately seem grievous to you. But Jesus is a faithful master, and He will not suffer you to forget them. He reminds you of them. He calls you back to them. Is He not daily exhorting you by your pastors? Is He not continually reminding you in the ministry of all His ordinances? Is not His Spirit daily speaking to your consciences? As a father among his children, so He dwells with you by the Holy Ghost. Come with Me from Lebanon, He says, when He sees you returning to that which you have renounced. Return ye backsliding children and I will heal

your backslidings. And if you sin, you have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.

Is it thus with you, dear brethren? Do you in Jesus Christ behold that face of God, and rejoice in His love? Do you meditate these purposes of God, and expect their accomplishment? Do you live as risen with Christ, and seated with Him in the heavenly places? Do you live in the world, feeling yourselves one with it, and yet looking forth upon it as men redeemed out of the midst of it? Do you see the world and all its events, and the men that are on the face of it, its cities, its multitudes with all their busy thoughts and activities, with all their proud projects and boasted achievements, presided over by Him with whom you are one; moderated, suffered to go thus far and no farther, under His hand; overshadowed by the incense cloud of His intercession, upheld by the grace which His intercession procures, because He shed His blood for them? Do you look forth upon the world, and are your compassions stirred, and your prayers and intercessions awakened by what you behold there? Do you feel yourselves part of another world and order of things, to which your life belongs, from which your motives flow, which contains the objects of your desire, unto which you labour, and for which you wait?

Or is it otherwise? Do you still love the present world and its ways? I do not say its things, for they also have a preciousness; nor its persons, for

you must love them with the love of Him who died for them; but, I say, its ways, its course, by which it exists for itself, and not for God. Do you still love your flesh and its pleasures? Do you still listen to sin and its enticements? Have you the home of your heart in the present order of things—not enduring it, but embracing it? Is your hope this, that the present order of things may continue yet a while, and that the end of it may not be in your day? Is it God that you dread, and His law the thing that you hate? And is His Son He whom you avoid thinking of? And would you feel yourself a free man, if there were not before you death, and resurrection, and a judgment, when you think you must meet God whether you will or not? Why should you dread God, when it is He that sent His Son to die for your sins? Why should you be unwilling to remember Jesus Christ, when it is He that died for your sins, and rose again for your justification? Why should *you* choose the world, to whom God offers a kingdom? Why should *you* serve the lusts of the flesh, who are called to reign with Jesus? Is not He interceding for you? Has not your life on earth, in the midst of its folly and sin, been spared, because He was interceding for you? You have been let alone from year to year in the patience and love of God, in the pity and compassion of God, and He has pleaded with your heart in many ways, that you might forsake that which must perish, and lay hold on that which shall stand even in the day when not the earth only, but the

heavens also shall be shaken. He has spoken to you by men; He has spoken to you in many a secret thought of your own hearts; He has spoken to you by events, by gains and losses, by successes and failures, by gifts and bereavements; but He spake not to you in His anger. It was in His patience, in His fatherly love, because of the yearnings of His bowels over you. He has not spoken in His anger. You have endured many things, but you could not have endured that. He has been angry with you, but He has not spoken to you in His anger. The blood of Jesus Christ was between you and His anger. Had His wrath been kindled but a little, ye should have perished from the way. But you are still in the way, for He hath not visited you in His anger. You are here this night, because you have not perished from the way, that He may reason with you yet this once.

Why should it be incredible with you that God has *given* you peace? Why should you not believe that your sins have been blotted out, and taken out of the way by Him who was dead and is alive again? Can the Son of God have died and risen again in vain? Is the world nothing changed by so mighty an event as that? What change, then, has that event produced for mankind? You cannot tell me? Learn, then, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." That blood is the world's ransom. Such was the preciousness of that person, that His death could cancel the debts

of all men and all generations. He hath bought you with His blood. By that death you have been redeemed unto God. The power of Satan, the dominion of sin has been broken. They have no more claims upon you. You have not now any longer to be afraid of death. That which separated you from God has been removed. Jesus has redeemed you unto God. He brings you to God, and He will present you faultless before God. Return therefore unto Him and He will not chide you, nor reproach you, nor call you to account. He is not imputing your trespasses unto you. He has imputed them unto His own Son. He will not chide you; but He will give you a clean conscience and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The past time of your life shall be forgotten, and He shall give you power to do all His will. Come to Him. He will make you to love Him. You shall learn to delight in His holy will and purposes. And the world that now clings so close to you shall become an object of indifference. It charms you now, but He will cause the charm to depart out of it. When you have seen the better thing which God will shew you, you shall find the world become an object of indifference. The present world I mean, the world as it is, for the world is not an object of indifference. Jesus shall return unto the world, and where the briars and thorns have been, there the plants of God's planting shall flourish. That body which died on the cross is the very body which rose from the dead. "He shewed them His hands and His feet." In that

same body He ascended into heaven. In that same body shall He return unto the earth. Only believe in Him now, and enter into the peace which He made for you through that body, and you shall stand with Him in the latter day on the earth in glorious bodies, when there shall be the new heavens and the new earth; when all the dead who have believed in Him shall live, when they shall come forth through that opened gate of the tomb through which His body passed, and they shall awake and sing, although they have dwelt in dust. Then ye shall have your reward; yea, though you come to Him but at this eleventh hour, ye shall have your reward—the same reward as those who have borne the burden and heat of the day—for ye shall reign on the earth, in that kingdom, where there shall be nothing that offendeth, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the tops of the mountains. That shall be your reward. Wherefore save yourselves from this untoward generation.

There is a great act of God to which all things now look forward. It is the sending again of Jesus Christ from the right hand of His Father. And that will take place as surely as did His resurrection. Men shall expect it as little as they expected His resurrection. The world shall be rolling on in its old course as it was in the days of Noah; as it was in the day of Sodom. It shall come upon an unconscious generation. But His saints shall hear His voice. They shall awake at His voice

who sleep in the dust; and they shall come with Him in the day of His appearing. And we which are alive and remain, shall be caught away. From the house-top, from the field, from the bed of rest, His saints that are alive and look for Him shall be caught away; friend from his friend, brother from beside his brother, workman from beside his fellow workman. They shall be caught away, they shall be missed; and no one shall know whither they have gone. They have gone with their glorious bodies to meet Him who is coming with the risen ones. And then He shall come with ten thousands of His saints to judge the world which would not have Him to reign over it; to avenge the blood of His holy ones on them that dwell on the earth, and to rule the nations with His rod. For God hath given Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Be wise therefore, now; be instructed while the day of longsuffering waiteth. Kiss the Son lest He be angry. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

And now unto the Father &c.

SERMON XVI.

THE ASCENSION.

EPH. i. 18-20.

"That ye may know . . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places."

Chap. ii. 6.—"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

WHEN perchance some province of a mighty empire has by the arts of a rebel prince been seduced from its allegiance, and the rebel has laid hold of its resources, and compelled its inhabitants to follow his standard in waging war with his lawful sovereign, the monarch seeks out his ablest general among them that stand around his throne —he chooses him, and commits to him the conduct of the war, and the recovery of the province —he furnishes him for the campaign, and sends him forth at the head of his armies, with promises of honour and reward. And the faithful one who has thus been chosen takes the command and goes forth whither he has been sent. And when he has drawn the army of the adversaries into battle,

and in fair fight has vanquished them, he recovers possession of their country, and makes it acknowledge itself again for a province of the empire. After remaining a little while to restore the government to order, and to set his officers and fellow-soldiers as faithful men in charge, in the castles and chief cities of the territory, he returns home; that if it so please the king he may celebrate his victory, and obtain the honour of a triumph. There, in the chief city of his land, he receives the victor's crown; glory and honour such as the world can give are conferred upon him; there is led behind him a long train of captives, and the citizens surround him, celebrating his might in songs, saying as they said of David, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." He has overcome on the field of battle; but he celebrates his victory when he has returned home, and when he that sent him forth has ordained him that honour.

So Jesus the Son of God was sent forth into the world that was at enmity with God, under the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of its darkness. That prince had seduced man, and he held all men in bondage through the fear of death, and he had made them all hate God, and through their fallen mortal flesh he fought against God, and all His holy will. Thither was Jesus sent, God's captain, His chosen One, His elect in whom His soul delighted. And He fought and overcame. By death, He destroyed him that had the

power of death. He entered the grave, and He overcame it, for its strength was sin, and He was holy; and God was with Him there, and heard His cry, and left not His soul in hell, nor suffered His Holy One to see corruption. In His own person He took flesh, and made a captive of it, and held it so. Through means of it He entered the field of battle, descended into the grave, met the enemy in the very stronghold of his power, and overcame. And He arose from the dead. And He received power over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to as many as God the Father should give Him. During forty days He appeared to His disciples, not setting up a kingdom, but speaking to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God which should be set up over that province which He had won, directing them to tarry in Jerusalem until the promise of the Father should come upon them. He triumphed not in this world; He shewed Himself not openly, but to a few humble men, the babes to whom great things had been revealed, which the wise and prudent could not see. And when He had told them that they should receive power, and be His witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth, He lifted up His hands and blessed them; and while He was yet in the act of doing so, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

He returned to the presence of God, whence He had been sent forth. He returned to Him who had sent Him; He had overcome; He had swal-

lowed up death in victory. He was able to say, it is finished. He had said, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." He had said it, and He had done it. And the Father received Him and acknowledged Him. He opened to Him the gates of righteousness. He received Him, a man, a victorious man. A new thing is seen in heaven, the first begotten from the dead, the first of many brethren. And He highly exalted Him, and gave Him glory. And He gave Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. God ordained Him a triumph, for He had taken captive a large captivity. Then did the Lord say unto David's Lord, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." He gave Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. He gave Him power over all flesh. He gave Him the necks of His enemies, and the willing hearts of His people. Nay, He made Him head over all things. He ordained Him this triumph as man; He gave Him honour as man. He gave Him honour as the head of men, as the captain of men, who should bring many sons unto glory. And that triumph was celebrated in such large song as had been prepared of old in the Psalms, "Thou hast

ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive." "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation." "Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the Lord." "Ascribe ye strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel." "The God of Israel is He who giveth strength and power unto His people. Blessed be God."

This is the great fact, which the scripture now read and the season[1] invite us to meditate. Jesus Christ is gone into heaven. The man Jesus Christ is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him. In this fact is a permanent revelation of the might of God, and of the good will of God to man. The "working of His mighty power" is shewn in it, says St. Paul. We know the exceeding greatness of God's power toward men—toward believing men—in that which He wrought in Christ as a believing man, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. It would have been a great and wonderful work of God, if the second person of the Godhead had come down to the earth, and taken a form, that He might be seen therein for a while, and that He might accomplish a work, and return again

[1] Preached on Ascension Day.

casting off that form and leaving it behind Him. But this is a far more wonderful, truly unfathomable thing. He took flesh that He might keep it, and make it part of Himself for ever—a part of His being, an instrument of His work—presented in Himself unto the Father, accepted by the Father as of Him, and eternally glorified in His adorable person. Jesus the son of Mary is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God, and angels, and authorities, and powers are made subject to Him. A man has believed in God, and trusted in God; and God has proved Him and tried Him, has given Him into the hands of His enemies, and has forsaken Him. And that man has believed, and trusted through it all. He hath set God continually before Him; the word of God has been a lamp to His feet, and a light to His path. Out of the depths He still called upon God.[1] With supplications and prayers, with strong crying and tears, He called upon God out of the depths, and in an acceptable time God heard Him, and in a day of salvation He helped Him. He cried unto God, "Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation;" and behold, God hath made Him His first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. He asked life of God, life for a man who was lying in the grave, and God gave it Him, even length of days for ever and ever. He is gone into heaven; He is accepted of the Father; the Father hath said unto that man, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

[1] Psalm lxxxviii.

That is the wonder. That is the wonder which St. Paul considers a measure of the might of God's power. Would it have been a measure of the might of God's power that the eternal Son should return to the bosom of the Father? No. The wonder is, the man Jesus Christ being set at the right hand of God. The Son of man, the son of David; He who was made of a woman, made under the law; He who was made a curse; He who had been forsaken of God; He who was crucified through weakness; He who was dead, is seated at the right hand of God: that is the wonder, and the measure of the might of God's power. The question had been, shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive be delivered? and it is solved. The prey is taken from the mighty, taken by the might of God's power, and is set above all power and might, and dominion; the lawful captive is delivered, and He is made Lord over all, to the glory of God the Father. He descended first into the lower parts of the earth, and now He has ascended up far above all heavens, and He shall fill all things.

The disciples beheld Him as He blessed them, and was parted from them, and carried up into heaven; and they *worshipped* Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. They worshipped Him. And at the name which God has given to that Man, every knee shall bow. His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall

be blessed in Him—all nations shall call Him blessed. Thus hath the Lord said, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despised, to Him whom the nations abhorred, to a servant of rulers; kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose Thee. The might of God's power has been measured and is known. A man has been surrendered to all the hold of the curse; the sins of the whole world have been laid upon Him; and the debt of the whole world has been required at His hand. The sorrows of death compassed Him about, and the pains of hell gat hold upon Him. He did not elude them, He endured them: through love to man, through obedience to the will of the Father who loved man, He endured them; He sank under them. He was brought low, and God helped Him. The Lord was His strength and song, and became His salvation, and behold, He is at the right hand of God, sharer of the Father's throne, in manhood, to be honoured as the Father is to be honoured.

Think not lightly, dear brethren, of this wonderful work of God. Learn there the measure of His mighty power, and behold there the use which His love has made of His mighty power. He sent His Son to fight our battle, and He hath given Him the victory. He loveth Jesus because He laid down His life for us. And in that body, which was marred, which was bruised for our sins and

pierced, Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. God is eternally made known in the Saviour of men. The glory of God is eternally visible through the man Jesus Christ. The relation of God to man is made the next grand relationship that comes after the adorable relations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Seek to apprehend the condescension of the Son of God, to become the Son of man; and seek to apprehend the glory to which the Son of man was exalted, when He was seated at the right hand of God. It is not now merely that God has come down to men, but that a man is at the right hand of God. Truly, "great is the mystery of godliness." "God was manifest in the flesh," for the Son of God was born of a woman, lived the life of a mortal man, died the death of a mortal man: and "He was justified in the Spirit." God acknowledged Him for His Holy One, and declared Him to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: "He was seen of angels," for they beheld Him, as if now for the first time revealed: "He is preached unto the Gentiles:" they hear of a God who is at hand, and not afar off; they hear of a God not to be propitiated, but who has made propitiation; they hear of a God who calls them brethren; they hear of a man who is able to make them sons of God: "He is believed on in the world," for He has been in the world; in His love and in His might He has been in the world; He has won back the world for

God, and He has sent His chosen witnesses; and their line is gone into all the earth, and their words unto the world's end: and "He is received up into glory," He who is God is received up into glory, for He had descended into dishonour and shame; the Son of God, the man of God's right hand, is received up. His victory was won where no man could follow Him, where no eye of man could follow Him. He sank. He disappeared from the eye of man under shame and dishonour. All flesh said, the enemy hath prevailed. But the eye of God followed Him, and saw His victory. God was the only witness of it: and He ordained for Him a triumph, and laid upon Him honour and majesty; He crowned Him with glory and honour. Man saw not His victory, but we believe in it. Man saw not His triumph, but we believe in it now, and we shall see it when He shall come in His glory. And every eye shall see it, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And now, our calling is to follow Him. Our calling is to believe as He did. And that is the model of the working of the mighty power of God in them that believe. We are by God made one with Him who is at His right hand. He hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. What He did in Him, He is doing in us, because we are members of Him. He was with Him, for He was His well beloved Son; and He is with us, for He has made us His sons in Him. Jesus gave power to become

the sons of God to as many as received Him. We have obtained the adoption of sons. That relationship—second only to the adorable relationship in the Godhead—has been conferred upon us, because we have been graffed into Christ, and made one with Him. He is our captain, and we are of the many sons whom He is bringing to glory. We are where He is. We are citizens of heaven, not citizens of the world. We are sent into the world for Him. We are His witnesses to the world. "All mine are thine, and thine are mine," said our blessed Lord, "and I am glorified in them." We glorify Him. He looks to us to glorify Him. We are the testimony to the world that there is a man at God's right hand. He hath said unto us, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And we have to say to men, "Be of good cheer, for the world has been overcome." Faith has overcome the world. Such is the working of God's mighty power toward them that believe—God's mighty power in such wise eternally waits upon faith; that faith was made the way by which His own beloved Son should overcome the world. Men are all in the conflict. Some fighting, some lying down in despair. We witness to them that they are fighting with a conquered enemy. We call them to share in a triumph. We invite them to believe, and be made one with the glorified Jesus, in whom the might of God has been manifested; that the might of God may be manifested in them also. We call them off from the vain

struggles of the flesh, which spring from pride, and can issue only in despair. The Son of God when He came into your flesh, prevailed not by fleshly struggles such as these, but He prevailed by believing in God, and by the might of God. Abraham, and all the patriarchs, and the saints of all times, prevailed not by fleshly struggles, and *they* attained no righteousness of their own. No man prevailed, and overcame, but He who believed in God, and whom God delivered. He had been promised. The saints believed in Him, and expected His victory. They saw His day afar off. They believed the word of God. They believed God, and it was counted unto them for righteousness. They ceased from their own works, that they might believe in the work of God. They stood still, and saw afar off the salvation of God. They acknowledged that God alone was good, that God alone was mighty; they waited for His salvation; and it was counted unto them for righteousness. And we witness for the same unto the present generations of men: that, if possible, many of them may believe in like manner, and be saved. That is our office in the world, the office of every baptised man, to make known unto men the righteousness and the salvation of God. And they who believe through our word are also joined unto Christ, and are raised up together, and seated together there in the heavenly places, in Him.

Indeed, brethren, we *have* presently that participation with Him who is in the heavens. Our

fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. It is not a fellowship of thought, or a fellowship of sympathy, or a fellowship of purpose or of character; it is a fellowship of real union. "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them," says our Lord, in speaking of us unto His Father, "that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." It is that fellowship with Him that makes us witnesses for Him. "We speak that which we know, and testify that we have seen." He did so, because He and the Father were one. We do so, because God has made us one with Him. We are of value to the earth in proportion as we have our conversation in heaven. We can take on our shoulders the whole earth's burden, according to our faith in Him who hath undertaken all *our* burden. As we look upon Him and behold His glory, and perceive how the Father hath exalted Him as the victor over the enemy, and believe that we ourselves are one with Him, so can we bear to look on the wretchedness and degradation, the misery and death, the obscure night in which the unbelieving world is held. Forth into the dark world we daily come, to see God denied, hated, resisted, blasphemed, by the creatures of His hand, by the objects of that love which made Him give His life for them; nay, by the very children who are called by His name, and who should be dwelling at His right hand: and we go, as from out of our sanctuary. And if we value our sanctuary, if we

believe in it, if we believe that we are seated with Him in the heavenly places, what compassion must that contrast move in us! What strong crying and tears must not that sight of the world wring out of us! Shall not we seek a place to weep? Shall not we remember that it hath been enjoined upon the Church, "that prayers and supplications, and intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men?" Shall not we seek a place where it can be done? Shall we not enquire whether there be any place where it is done?

Oh! the lowness of the faith of the children of God. They can walk to and fro in the fallen miserable world without a tear. Do they pray? Yes, they pray; but it is for themselves, and about their own anxieties and uncertainties. They are, darkly—without confidence in God—working out their *own* salvation. They have misinterpreted the exhortation to work it out with fear and trembling, because it is God who shall work in them; and they have gone back to seek some righteousness that the flesh can have a hand in. They dwell not in the rest which Jesus has achieved for them. They know not their unity with Him. They look *to be* seated in the heavenlies; but they know not that they *are* seated there. Having begun in the spirit, they are going away to be made perfect in the flesh. They are not living continually in the blessedness of men who are accepted in the beloved. They come not forth from heaven into the world. They look not from thence upon the region of darkness and sorrow,

which so many of their brethren are still dwelling in. No wonder then that the sight affects them so little. They see no such great difference between their own case and that of others; no wonder then that they forget their testimony, and that they seek not a means of pouring out their supplications for all men. St. Paul said, "I would to God, that all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am." Are you exclaiming that? And why are you not? 'Tis because you know not the things that are freely given to you of God. You know not your position. You have time for your vain discussions about religion, about doctrines, about interpretations, about knowledge of divine things, about human ordinances, and inventions and devices of policy. You have time to flatter one another. You have time to court for flatteries. You have time to lay yourselves out for the vain breath of man's consent, his approbation, his admiration. You have time for contentions and debates. And meanwhile, the witness for the mighty power of God and for the salvation of God, is waited for by a perishing world, and listened for by the patient, vexed ear of Him who died to redeem the world, and who has enriched you with all spiritual blessings, that you might proclaim His mercies and might impart them; but you have no time to bear that witness, and have learned no skill of how, in the will of God, that witness is to be rendered.

The truth is, that many of you suppose that

Christianity is a doctrine or a commandment, instead of a living condition and growing progressive fact. And the rest come short of believing that which God has done for them, and know not themselves as seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

And do I mean to say that we are already victors, and reposing after the conflict has closed? No. Of course not. We are only fighting the good fight of faith, and we need all the armour of God. Our conflict is more dreadful and more perilous than any conflict that the world knows of. And the enemy is not he who can kill the body, and after that hath nothing more that he *can* do; "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." But it is the fight of faith. It is the fight of following a leader who hath overcome. It is the fight of following the man Jesus Christ. It is the fight of cleaving to Him, of abiding in Him unto whom God hath joined us, and from whose love nothing can estrange us—from whom nothing can sever us but our own unbelief. And has not He said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne"? That glory is clear before us. But it is for him that overcometh. It is not for him that has lived his life long, and never felt that he was in a con-

flict. Neither is it for him who hath fought as if no captain had preceded him, or as if he had a victory now to win single-handed for himself.

Dear brethren, Christianity is not a history any more than it is a doctrine. It is a living operation, a work of God. It is a work of God that is moving forward to its consummation. It would carry all of us along with it; but it may pass us by. We belong to it, we are parts of the work. We are embraced in God's great workmanship in Jesus Christ. We are in Jesus Christ instruments of His work. The history of the new creation is not past. The days of the new creation are not closed. By faith we continue where God has placed us in His Son. Where He has placed us, there He works upon us, there He uses us for His work. And He will not fail nor be discouraged. He will accomplish His wonderful work with us all. He hath made us one with His Son; and He hath seated us in spirit with Him in the heavenly places; and He will yet glorify us along with Him. The working of His mighty power towards them that believe shall accomplish it. He will fashion our vile bodies after the likeness of the glorious body of Jesus. Not merely after the likeness of His resurrection, but after the likeness of the body of His glory. He has that power over them that believe. As the potter hath power over the clay; if it will only be clay, the potter has power over it. If it will be soft and pliant, and will lie on the wheel, and not call itself a made and finished

vessel, the potter hath power over it. If it be marred, he will put it on the wheel again and turn it once and again to his hand, and make a vessel of it at last for the master's use. He will repent for it, and never be weary of the work. God will repent for us, and never be weary of the work, so long as we believe and trust Him. So long as we will lie in His hand, and say, "we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."

And is not He who hath ascended on high Himself our brother: bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh? Is not our flesh glorified in Him? Has not He been formed for the praise of God a perfect vessel of that same clay; a perfect vessel, approved of God, accepted of God, set of God at His right hand, fit to be the eternal revelation of God unto all His creatures? Such was the fruit of the working of the mighty power of God. He brought Him forth, the perfect manifestation of God—substance and groundwork of the great mystery of godliness. And being brought forth, He is called the first-fruits: and the first-fruits are the promise and assurance of the harvest. And after Him, next to Him, shall come forth they that are His vessels formed of the same clay, by the same hand, under the same mighty power. They shall be unto praise, and glory, and honour, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. God shall be seen in *them* also, for they are the members of His Christ. Through each, in his measure and in his place, shall the glory of God be seen; still more through

all set together in one, and embodied and manifested with their Head over them in the day of His appearing—in the kingdom of God—shall the glory of God be seen.

And our assurance is yet greater. For He who is exalted is not only one with us—separable from us by nothing but our own unbelief; He is not only our brother, with a brother's heart joined to love that is divine; He is not only an approved vessel of the same clay with us, by the work of the same mighty hand; but He is appointed of God for us an High Priest over the house of God. He is a minister of that true tabernacle which the Lord pitched. By His own blood He hath consecrated for us the way into the holiest of all. And He appeareth in the presence of God for us; He makes intercession for us. There He is—set for us to plead with God—set of God to plead for us with God: continually to make intercession for us. He pleads that the work of God may go on, that the mighty power of God may never cease to be exercised. Lest our sins should cause it to cease, He points to the blood of His cross. Lest our infirmities, and our fainting, our sicknesses, or our death should cause it to cease, He points to His fainting and agony, He points to the dust of death in which He lay, and to His dark unwitnessed conflict. He pleads for us to the willing ear of His Father, who heard Him always; pleads for us with the compassion of a fellow-man, with the zeal of one who knows the purpose of His Father; with a love boundless as the very being of God.

And He is Lord of all. He who is our brother is made Lord of all. Angels and principalities and powers are made subject to Him. He hath the keys of hell and of death. When He was on the *earth*, all nature obeyed Him. He walked upon the waves. He stilled the winds. He fed thousands with a few loaves of bread. And *now*, the kingdoms of the earth, and their kings and counsellors; the multitudes of men that toss like the waves of the troubled ocean; the world and all its revolutious; they move, and turn, and pause, and go forward again at His will. Life and death and every other creature serve Him—serve Him who as on this Ascension day was greeted, the victorious man, and seated on His Father's throne. And it is for His body, the Church, that He is made Head over all things; that we may be perfected; that the Church may be builded.

Oh that men would think of it, and every man cleave unto *Him* with faith; and cleave unto every *other* man with charity, and allow it to be builded.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON XVII.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Acts ii. 32, 33.

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

Jesus is gone into heaven. He has presented Himself without spot unto God. By His own blood He has entered into the holiest of all, even into the heavenly places themselves. The Father hath accepted Him, acknowledged Him, and hath said unto Him, "Sit thou at my right hand." And He hath sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High. As man He hath sat down there,—as given for man, as having died for man—whom the Father loved, because He laid down His life for men. And unto Him as man, when He had sat down at the right hand of the Father, is fulfilled the promise that had been made to man. He has received the Holy Ghost. He is made the second man, the quickening Spirit. He has received the Holy Ghost; and He has become the baptizer with the Holy Ghost.

He loved His own which were in the world; He had loved them through all His sufferings, under all His sufferings, even until death. And now He is glorified with that glory, which, prior to His incarnation, He had with the Father before the world was. And being exalted, and having become the baptizer with the Holy Ghost, He loves them still. He had promised them that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days after His departure. They are obediently tarrying in Jerusalem, according to His word; they scarce understand His promise; they scarce know what it is that they are waiting for and expecting; but they have confidence in Him; they expect to be formed for His praise, and they desire to be formed for His praise. They are to be His witnesses when once they have been endued with power from on high. They desire to be prepared—accomplished—for bearing that testimony. From day to day they are waiting in prayer and supplication. And He has not forgotten them, He loves them; and His thought is of them. He has prayed the Father as He said He would. He has begun His intercession for man; and He has been made the baptizer with the Holy Ghost. And now the day of Pentecost is fully come, and they are all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there cometh a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filleth all the house where they are sitting: and there appear unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, sitting upon each of them; and they are all

filled with the Holy Ghost. This, then, is that which they had been commanded to wait for. This event changes all their position; changes their condition. They have been baptized with the Holy Ghost according to His promise; they have received the promise of the Father; and they have been endued with power from on high. They are now His witnesses; from this day forth they shall bear their testimony.

Let us consider this great fact. The Holy Ghost has been sent down upon men. And first, let us consider this gift in its source. The Holy Ghost is first given to the man Jesus Christ. He is capable of receiving that gift, and He is worthy of receiving that gift. And He has received power over all flesh, that He might communicate that gift to as many men as the Father should give Him. No other man receives the Holy Ghost because he is worthy to receive it. They receive the Holy Ghost to whom Jesus imparts it. God gave the Spirit unto Him not by measure. It pleased the Father that in Him all the fulness should dwell. Men receive from Him in measure. Out of His fulness we all receive, and grace for grace. By the baptism of the Holy Ghost we are made partakers of that which He has received. We are made one with Him who hath sat down at the right hand of God, and who hath received the promise of the Father; and He makes us partakers of that which He hath received there. He has received it directly from God, and we receive

it through Him as our Mediator. He obtained that promise when He entered into the holiest of all with His blood. He received not that promise as God, but as man; and He received it as man when He entered into the holiest of all with His own blood. And that blood was offered for the sins of the whole world; and from Him the Holy Ghost comes upon all them who are cleansed in that blood. Remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost are the gift of God to men under the gospel. Remission of sins first through the blood of Christ; even as through His blood the man Jesus Christ was received, and made to sit down on the throne of God: and then the gift of the Holy Ghost through Him who personally and directly received from God the promise of the Father. Let us stir up our faith in this, let us believe in that virtue of His blood, and know that our sins are forgiven us for His name's sake. Let us believe that we are clean through His blood, clean vessels to receive through Him that holy gift. Let us feel that we are partakers with Him who is at the right hand of the Father, even as they were on whom those tongues of fire were seen, and in whom that power of a present God was shewn forth.

And let us consider the nature of this gift. He sent the Holy Ghost. He sent a person. He who has come to the Church is a person. He is the Spirit of Him who is at the right hand of God—the Spirit of the Lord—the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who is made Lord. Jesus has been made Lord to the glory of God the Father, and that He

may glorify God, He has received the Holy Ghost; and He has sent Him. He who is sent is a person. He who has come to the Church, and of whose coming that rushing mighty wind, those tongues of fire, and that spiritual utterance were the outward token, is a person, and has a will. His will is to act as the Spirit of the man Jesus Christ, in men, with men, and upon men. He is God, having the mind of God, having the love of God, the compassions and mercies of God, but having also the holiness and jealousy of God. Where He dwells these also dwell. He is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. By Him the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of those in whom He dwells. He gives bowels and mercies. He is the Spirit of holiness. He dwells among men: and men are selfish, and wilful, and contentious; they are short-sighted and ignorant of God's purposes, and indifferent about them; they would make all things serve them; all their riches, all their gifts, they would use to advance and glorify themselves, yea even this gift of the Holy Ghost. And so the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, is vexed by them—grieved, resisted, quenched. He is grieved because He is jealous for Jesus, because His will is at one with that of Jesus, and because He fulfilleth not the will of any one but Jesus. He is sent to accomplish the purpose of God, His mind is to accomplish it, His heart is set upon it—not merely in the men in whom He dwells, but through means of them, and in all the bounds of God's

creation. He is the Spirit of Him who is Lord of all, and into whose hand not men only, but all things are put, and who shall perfect the will of God in all things, and present all things perfect unto God. Of that Lord He is the Spirit, and with these ends in view, He dwells in the Church. And He is grieved by men who know not and seek not the accomplishment of that purpose, and who would use the Holy Ghost in attaining some lower objects, which they have imagined for themselves, or which they have chosen for themselves from among the revealed purposes of God.

Let me urge this consideration upon you. The Holy Ghost is not an influence, or set of influences; He is not an operation; He is not a character or state of mind, as when we say of two men that they are of the same spirit. The Spirit of Christ is not the thoughts of Christ in us, or the heart of Christ in us. No, but He is a person; He is the third person in the adorable Godhead; He works all these things in men; these are His operations; but He is far greater than they all. They may cease, they may disappear, but He may still be there. We do not cause the Holy Ghost to be in ourselves by our cultivation of holy thoughts in our minds, or of holy affections in our hearts. He is freely given us of God, that He may cause us to delight to do the will of God, and that He may write God's law in our hearts. We cannot do that work and so have the Spirit of Jesus, but if we have the Spirit of Jesus He will do that work. Yet you can grieve Him, you can vex Him, you

can resist Him, you can quench Him, you can do despite unto Him. Truly where men think they can do much they can do nothing, and where men think they can do little they can do all. They cannot bring down the Holy Ghost from heaven; but they can cause Him to depart. They cannot quicken themselves with eternal life; but when God who is rich in mercy hath quickened them through Jesus Christ, they can quench that divine gift. Let us learn to know our own impotency, that we may cast ourselves upon God, and with gratitude receive from Him, and rejoice in His gifts; and let us know our own might—our fearful might and responsibility—and take heed that we lose not that which He hath bestowed, that we perish not through resisiting His salvation.

Let us consider the object of this gift. By the Holy Ghost these men are made one body; they are baptized by one Spirit into one body, they become the body of Christ; Christ is in them and they in Him; they are united to the man who sits in the throne of God; His power is in them, He speaks by them; He acts by them. They know that He is at the right hand of the Father. They know it not by hearsay, they know it not by inference, they know it not through understanding of the holy Scriptures, they know it as though they had seen it, and they are capable of bearing witness of it. He is sending His Church into the world; it is His minister unto the world, His servant in whom He would be glorified; and as

He undertook not His own ministry until He was anointed, so He permits not them to undertake their ministry until they have received an unction from the Holy One. They had not strength as men to bear that burden, which as His witnesses they should have to bear; they could not stand alone for God against all the world without God's presence, unless God dwelt in them, unless they were alive with the life of God: unless God should countenance them, should fortify and confirm them, should help them with help from on high, nay should witness along with them, and as it were by their side, they could not undertake nor fulfil that ministry.

But the day of Pentecost came wherein God met all these necessities. First, the coming of the Holy Ghost was to them the assurance that He whom they had seen carried away and hid by a cloud from their sight, *was* set down at the right hand of God, and had received the promise of the Father. So St. Peter says in our text, "This Jesus God hath raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Secondly, the Holy Ghost is in them as a spirit of power; giving them a mouth and utterance which none can gainsay or resist; enabling them to speak as no man ever spoke before; making their word the word of God, quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword. He is in them a spirit of cour-

age, so that the most timid among them is set above the fear of man. The Spirit of Him who was dead and is alive again, and liveth for evermore, is in them, and delivers them from the fear of death. With all boldness they speak; they glory in tribulations; they give thanks to God when they suffer for His name. And thirdly, the Holy Ghost is with them, stands by them in their testimony. When they went forth and preached everywhere, He worked with them, and confirmed the word by signs following. God bare them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will. He witnessed along with them thus that men might believe their word; and when any one had believed their word, He bare witness still farther to the truth, by coming upon those on whom they laid their hands. "We are His witnesses," said St. Peter, "and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

And their testimony was, that Jesus is at the right hand of God; that a man has died and risen again, and has sat down on the throne of God, and is made Lord of all; and that He is a Prince and a Saviour, to grant repentance and remission of sins; and that He is about to come again to reign and to give an inheritance unto all them that believe in His name. And when they who heard them were pricked in their hearts, and said unto them, what shall we do? they answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of

Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

But the Holy Ghost is not given only that there may be in the world an adequate witness for Jesus. We have been made the sons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Because we are sons, therefore hath He sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, so that we are able with a peculiar significancy to say Abba, Father. Because we are heirs, therefore are we sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession—until He whose fellow-heirs we are shall enter upon His inheritance. The Lord hath said unto Him, sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool; and until His enemies become His footstool, He does not enter upon His inheritance; as it is said in the epistle to the Hebrews, "This man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." When His enemies have become His footstool, He shall enter upon His inheritance. When all things shall be subdued unto Him, when the last enemy that shall be destroyed has been destroyed, then shall He as heir possess all things, and present Himself and all things with Himself unto God. He is heir as man; as man He shall

possess; and when He possesses the inheritance, we shall possess because we are of Him. God has wrought us for the self same thing, and He hath given us the earnest of the Spirit. This is the force of the reasoning of St. Paul in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," he says. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;" "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." And again, "we which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." He who is at the right hand of God is waiting for His inheritance, but He has received the Holy Ghost. He first suffered, and then He entered into His glory, and God gave Him an inheritance, even a kingdom which shall rule over all. We presently suffer with Him, but God hath raised us up with Him, and seated us in the heavenly places with Him, and He hath made us partakers of the Holy Ghost. We partake of that which He received when He entered into glory, and it is the pledge that we shall also be glorified with Him in that day when He shall no longer be hidden in the secret of God's presence, but manifested in the glory of His Father, and in His own glory, and that of the holy angels.

In all these ways, of all these things, is the Holy Ghost a witness. He witnesses in us, for

through Him our words and works are the words of God's truth, and the works of God's love. He witnesses along with us, for He confirmeth the word of truth by signs following. He witnesses unto us that Jesus is at the right hand of God, and that He hath received the promise of the Father. He witnesses to the world that Jesus is Lord and Saviour, the forgiver of sin, and the baptizer with the Holy Ghost. He witnesses to us that we are the children of God's family, and the heirs of a kingdom that shall not be moved. Let us then have regard to the object for which the Holy Ghost is given, and desire that that object may be fulfilled—let us pray that it may be fulfilled. Let us yield to the Holy Ghost, that it may be fulfilled. Let us know ourselves for the members of Jesus Christ, and the children of God, that the Holy Ghost, who is given us, may not be hindered in His testimony. Let us look forward to our inheritance, that we may value the earnest of it. Let us look upward to Him who is the heir, that our fellowship may be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

That was a serious question which St. Paul asked the disciples whom he met at Ephesus, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They were disciples, they were believers, and yet he asks them, have ye received the Holy Ghost? And they said unto him, "we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." And yet it was in writing to these same

men, as part of the church at Ephesus, that he afterwards used these words, "in whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." We see them first in one condition in which they were not sealed—had not received the first fruits of the Spirit; and here we find them in another condition in which they *have* been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Also we know that when the disciples were scattered abroad, and went everywhere preaching the word, and Philip especially had in Samaria made many disciples, and baptized them, the apostles immediately on hearing of it, sent two of their number to Samaria. They did not reckon that a complete work had been done for them in their being baptized, and they sent two of their number to complete it; "who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for as yet He was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." It is manifest, then, that baptism, without the sealing of the Holy Ghost, makes an incomplete Christian in the sense of the gospels and epistles. The Holy Ghost perceives a man to be an incomplete Christian—speaks of him as an incomplete Christian—if he has not been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. He is an heir without the earnest of the inheritance. He is one

with Jesus in His death and resurrection, but he is not one with Him in anything that happened to Him after the "cloud received Him out of their sight." He is not one with Him in this—His having received the promise of the Father. He may continue in prayer and supplication; he may be continually in the temple, praising and blessing God; he may be all and more than all that they were before the day of Pentecost, but he can be no witness for Jesus Christ at the right hand of God. He cannot have knowledge for it, he cannot have strength for it, he has no competency for it. Nay more, he cannot be looking for the inheritance, nor longing for the redemption of the purchased possession, nor desiring the manifestation of the sons of God, nor in any due measure knowing what is the hope of his calling, and apprehending that for which he hath been apprehended of Jesus Christ.

And how were men sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise? Was that sealing ministered by Jesus Christ through men, or was it directly, miraculously, and without the accompaniment of any external form of impartation? Directly and miraculously only in two instances. Necessarily so at the first, for to those who were waiting on the day of Pentecost, there was none on earth who could be the instrument of imparting the Holy Ghost. A direct act of the Lord Jesus Christ alone could then impart the Holy Ghost, or make that impartation a testimony to His being seated at the right hand of the Father. And again, the

gift of the Holy Ghost was imparted directly and miraculously to Cornelius and his household, because it was necessary to bear witness to the admission of the Gentiles to be fellow-heirs and members of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ. But in no other instance was the Holy Ghost imparted directly, or in any other way than by laying on of the hands of men. It was by the laying on of the apostles' hands that the Holy Ghost was given. Philip baptized and made disciples, but he gave not the Holy Ghost; he did not seal them with the Holy Spirit of promise. When that was to be done, the apostles sent two of their number, and it was done by them. That was the regular and ordinary means whereby God sealed men with the Holy Spirit of promise. How that grace was provided for, when the preachers of the gospel were multiplied, and the disciples increased in number everywhere, and the apostles were diminished in number, and at last removed by death, Scripture does not inform us. Only of two things we are certain, that Jesus Christ did not forsake His Church, nor did His promise for which His apostles had waited fail—of this we are sure; and of this also, that along with the want of that outward means of sealing with the Holy Spirit of promise, the testimony for Jesus has decayed; the presence of the Holy Ghost has become occult; the consciousness of our sonship has been clouded; the courage of the good soldiers of Christ has become faint; the hope of the inheritance has been forgotten;

and men have ceased to desire the redemption of the purchased possession, and the coming and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But we must now consider in what way it is that the Holy Ghost dwells and works in the body of Christ. We have said that He is given to every believer as the spirit of adoption and as the earnest of his inheritance. We have said that the Church, the body of Christ, was formed by the gift of the Holy Ghost, for it is by the Holy Ghost that we are all baptized into one body. And the Church being thus constituted, the Holy Ghost continually proceeds from the Head upon the members of the body. He is God, and He dwells in Christ and in His Church after a spiritual and divine manner, not to be conceived by human ideas, not to be expressed in human words; and in each member of the body He is present according to a different measure, and for diverse operations. Unto every man is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. The body is one, and every one of its members is necessary to its perfection; and the Spirit is one, and He is present throughout the whole body. He cannot fully express Himself nor do all His works through one man because of the divine vastness of that which He has to express, and the variety and multitude of simultaneous operations

which He has to perform. But it is through men that He is to express Himself and to do these works, for He is the Spirit of the man Jesus Christ; and therefore men are set in order in the Church, that through one man the Spirit of Christ may express one divine thing, or perform one divine operation, and through another may express another divine thing, or perform another divine operation, and so, through all the multitude of those who are members of the body of Christ, He may bring forth all the multitude of His divine treasures. His present operation is partly expressed in the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, and is said to be "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It is partly expressed in the twelfth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, where the apostle, after mentioning that of which he speaks to the Ephesians, and which chiefly concerned ministry in the Holy Ghost, goes on to speak of cheerful mercy, and undissembled love, and abhorrence of evil, and steadfastness to good, of brotherly love, and preferring others before ourselves, of diligence in business, of fervour in spirit, of rejoicing in hope, and of a long catalogue of similar virtues, as being gifts of the Holy Ghost, and as being distributed in different proportions to different members of the Church. Other parts of holy Scripture shew us

how the Holy Ghost brings forth the full worship of God in its various parts through various members of the body of Christ. One He finds a more fitting vessel through whom to pour forth a thank-offering, another through whom to make supplications, another through whom He may cause to ascend His intercessions for the saints, or His pleadings for the world. Thus does the Holy Ghost act in the body of Christ, thus would He act through men, members of the body of Him who sent the Holy Ghost, and of whom the Holy Ghost is the Spirit. Only, there must be no schism in the body, and all its members must have the same care one of another.

If the Holy Ghost *can* thus dwell in the body of Christ, thus work in it, and express Himself, and fulfil the mind of Christ through every one of its members, then the object can be attained for which the Church exists, and for which the Holy Ghost was given on the day of Pentecost. If from any cause He cannot so work and express Himself, then the object of God in the Church, and by means of the Church, must be hindered and postponed. If the members have not the same care one of another; if there be a schism in the body, or many schisms; or rather, if the Church, neglectful of the apostolic warnings, have suffered itself to become disorganized, and have dissolved itself into a mere assemblage of self-interested individuals, clinging together here and there, fortuitously perhaps, through force of out-

ward circumstances, through compulsion of civil power, or through the temporary influence and leadership of men of parts among themselves; if one part be puffed up against another, and one man against another, so as to be mutual devourers, instead of mutual helpers: then it is clear to any one's perception, that in such a state of the body the Holy Ghost can only be grieved and quenched; that the counsel of God is superseded and frustrated; that for the time He is made to stand aside in that house which He designed for His own habitation, by men who wish to be somewhat; and His voice is silenced by the din of their passions and quarrellings.

And you all know well enough, that the description which I have just given of the nature, and objects, and manner of that divine gift of the Holy Ghost, is, so far as I have carried it, the true and scriptural description. There is not a man among you whose conscience does not bear witness to the truth of what I have said. And do not we all know what is the real state of things in Christendom now in regard to the Holy Ghost, who was once given; in regard to the distribution of His holy gifts, and in regard to the body in which He is to dwell, and by whose members He is to operate? Let us look one another in the face as honest men, and tell one another what we see, and not be afraid to acknowledge it. Are not we *apparently* in the condition of those incomplete Christians, who, having been baptized, had not yet received the Holy Ghost by

the laying on of the apostles' hands? Can we say of ourselves that which St. Paul said of the Ephesians: "In whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance?" Are not we in the condition of those who could not be used as witnesses for Him who is at the right hand of God; who were not permitted to witness for Him? And should we become conscious of our want of this sealing, and desire to obtain it, whither shall we turn ourselves; to whom shall we make our application? Not to men; for they profess not to bestow the Holy Ghost as the seal and earnest of our inheritance; they have forgotten the inheritance and the seal of it as we have; they bestow somewhat, but they come short of bestowing that of which we stand in need. And if to God Himself, then we need to remember that the distributions of the Holy Ghost were made directly but once, and ever thereafter through means of an ordinance; so that if we would not be cast in our ignorance and undefended simplicity upon the wild sea of delusions and enthusiasms, our personal prayers should rather be for the recovery of the *whole* Church and for the restoration of *all* God's ordinances.

And supposing that seal bestowed and the Holy Ghost given, even as by the laying on of apostles' hands He at first was given, how shall we hold that gift or use it for God? Can we revive that divine organization? Can we set ourselves in our places in the body of Christ?

Can we set one another in our places in the body of Christ? Can we judge and determine our own gifts, and wherewithal each of us is to stir himself up to serve the Lord, and to edify the body of Christ? And if our own gifts be discovered, and the line of service made plain in which we are to use to profit that "manifestation of the Spirit," which is given unto us, who shall permit us to exercise it, who is prepared to allow us to be profitable to him in God's way? We may, if we choose, go to the outcasts and the poor, to the wandering children, and those who have nobody to care for them; such persons are a fair and open subject for the charitable and the zealous, for the active and the gifted; for the vain, who wish to get at least some sort of theatre for the display of themselves; nay, even for the religious talker and deceiver. But that each should make himself profitable to all the rest, or should lay himself out to receive profit from all the rest, is in the loosest only and most unmeaning manner of speech thought of or allowed.

And what can we do? Shall we despair and say, "God has been defeated. The Church will never grow together, and become an habitation of God through the Spirit. We shall never come unto the perfect man." Or shall we not rather fall back upon our faith in that which is with God, and say, "To us belongeth confusion of face, but to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him." "Although the fig tree shall not blossom,

neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." You can fall back upon that faith, and make confession unto God, who hath ever repented for a repenting people, and sent them a deliverer when He saw that their power was gone.

But yet more, dear brethren, you live now in the last days. You all know you do. And the last days are worse than the first. The disciples could not stand for God in the first days without the gift of the Holy Ghost and the personal seal of their fellowship with Him who was at the right hand of God. God hid them, and forbade them to shew themselves, or to lift up their voice in His name, until He had endued them with power from on high. And we are conscious of the absence of that seal, and that we manifest no such endowment of power from on high. And we have fallen upon worse days, and a greater fight than they. The spiritual antichrist is about to be revealed in his matured strength. And he and they that pertain to him shall be endued with power from the pit. And they who have not the Holy Ghost, and who regard not the Church of God as His dwelling-place, shall wonder after him, and be deceived by his miracles which

he shall have power to do. And all you shall be deceived who are proud men, or selfish men, or vain men, or who separate yourselves in spirit from the body of Christ, or who do not seek and desire to obtain the seal of oneness with the glorified Jesus.

And the inheritance—shall those obtain it who have not the earnest of it? How shall they answer the enquiry, "Where is the seal of the Holy Ghost?" Shall your explanations, or arguments, with which you set that question aside this day, serve you in that day when you desire to enter the inheritance? Why, they do not satisfy your own conscience this day. How shall they then: when you must bring some proof that you are heirs; some divine mark of your being fellow-heirs with Christ?

If you would stand in the evil days that are at the door, if you would be acknowledged as heirs, and enter upon the inheritance, you must receive that seal; you must have all that which they had who were assembled together at Pentecost. And I pray you to ask of God that He would have mercy upon His people, and that He would speedily revive His ordinances, and recover His organized Church, and bestow His gifts; and at last, by His own way—of apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors and teachers—bring us unto the perfect man, and unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON XVIII.

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

HEBREWS xi.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report," &c.—And,

Rev. vi. 9, 10.—And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

THIS is a wonderful glimpse into the Lamb's book of life. Thus writes the Holy Ghost concerning the saints. This is the way in which God speaks of men—even as a father speaks of his children. *He* records their names, He celebrates their faith. He makes mention of their actions, of their self-denials, and their sufferings. He thinks it not a condescension unworthy of Him to speak of them thus. From Abraham the friend of God, from Israel the Prince of God, down to poor Rahab, He would mention and name them all. But time fails Him. The creature's frailty through whom He speaks—the creature's frailty to whom He speaks, hinder Him. He is able to speak of all, and as it were, within Himself, He knows, and remembers, and mentions them all. He calls them His saints—His workmanship. All their

works are His works in them. He celebrates that which in each of them He was able to effect.

The common character in them all is faith. They lived in the visible world, but they lived for the invisible; and in all the conditions and occupations of life, they had it in their hearts to sacrifice the visible and the present for the unseen thing. They were kings and princes, they were warriors and counsellors, they were shepherds and vinedressers, they were peasants, servants, and even bondmen and bondwomen. They had enough to tempt them, to occupy and absorb them, to crush and disappoint and dispirit them. They had nothing but faith all their lives, nothing more than hope in their death; yet they endured as seeing Him who is invisible. They beheld the promises *afar* off. And of them all God the Holy Ghost saith, "of them the world was not worthy."

What a continuous stretching out towards the promise we have in this roll of the Old Testament saints—from Abel and his sacrifice, down to the prophets who saw the captivity and desolations of Jerusalem. And it is all written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come; that we, when temptation shall come to its height, and the promises of God shall be covered under the most hopeless darkness, knowing God's power in them, encouraged by His mention and promise of them, may endure as they did, and obtain the victory; and receive that better thing, that they at last with us be made perfect.

From the time of Adam, who, having the memory of a different state of things, was differently situated from any of his children, down to Moses and the tabernacle, were many generations of mankind, to whom God made Himself known through sensible—though various and unfixed, unordained means; through means which were not so much revelations of Him, as tokens and signs of His presence; the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of the future Christ, using such instruments as He pleased, to drop the word of God, and sow the seeds of revelation.

From Moses until the destruction of the temple, there was an ordained manner of God's presence; a local abode of God on earth—whither man should come unto Him, and whence proceeded His revelation of Himself: the former manner of revelation being however not lost, but rather amplified, that through means of it God might unfold the hope of His people, and deposit in words the purposes of His heart concerning man.

After Moses and the judges, and the kings and the prophets, when the ark of the covenant was lost, and the Urim and Thummim had disappeared from the high priest's breastplate, came long generations to whom tradition and record were the source of the knowledge of God. In their day the polity of Israel was no longer independent; it was fixed to the wheel of the general fortunes of the world, and revolved with the revolutions of the successive empires in which power was embodied. During this period, the

people of God were more or less mingled with the Gentiles, and became like to them. Their religion was stiffened into formalism, or held loosely and indifferently through regard to political circumstances and advantages, or put away for the doubts and conjectures of blind nature, under the name of philosophy. But at last there came a generation who saw God, among whom God walked, and to whom the kingdom of God was announced and offered; and a formal religion, philosophy, politics, all alike, were displeased with God when they saw Him. He walked not according to their rule and tradition. His views, His promises, disturbed their views, and clashed with their interests, differed from their interpretations and expectations, brought into question their authority and their commentaries. The sight of holiness maddened the hypocrites. The sight of present reality maddened those who boasted of Moses, and clung to the ghost of tradition. The gospel of a kingdom made those tremble who had done all to stand well with the world, and to whom any change was ruin. The works of a present God, and the bringing of God and the people near to one another, maddened those who had acted as if God were in their keeping, and grace to be dispensed only at their pleasure. Therefore, from these simple, natural, so habitual as to be almost unconscious causes, that generation —one of whom God was, and to whom He *personally* announced and offered the kingdom of heaven —crucified the Lord of glory; demanded, violently

demanded the death of the righteous one; and afterwards rejected the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and at the hand of that generation was required the blood of all the martyrs, from that of righteous Abel to that of Zacharias.

Then the new creation began to exist, and a new form of the presence of God. In the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the new creature sprang up. He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. The Holy Ghost was given, and the new—the eternal life. Henceforth God was with men, and in men: not any more in an arbitrary or in a typical form—in a tabernacle or "worldly sanctuary,"—but in a living permanent habitation: the Church, the body of Christ, with its organisation, its ordinances, and its actings, became the revelation and presence of God. Faith no longer had verbal revelation concerning the invisible God for its sole object. There was a present God. The Church was a real temple. Each member of the Church had received the Holy Ghost, and His body was a temple. The invisible abode in a visible thing, and was present through means of it. God was present. He spake and acted through His Church. Signs and wonders were done in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the Church is His body and His bride, and has no name but His. God had "given gifts unto men, that God the Lord might dwell."[1] And He dwelt, not merely for the sake of dwell-

[1] Psalm lxviii.

ing, but for the sake of acting, and of blessing His creation by the accomplishment of His will.

Under this new form of the advancing purpose of God in man, the earth yielded a new harvest of saints and martyrs. As to them we have no similar inspired record; but the Church this day[1] in faith celebrates them, and in the midst of the Church the Holy Ghost triumphs because of them. We know from this eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, how God looks upon them, and how He would have us to think and speak of them. And when we think and speak of them, we think and speak of that which faith hath done and can do; of that which God hath done in this last form of self-revelation; of that which God hath done thus present on the earth. We see a period of resistless progress, during which the words of God being spoken in faith, and the works of God being wrought, God Himself bare witness in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. By the power of God His truth was testified. By the power of God faith sprang up in the hearts of the hearers. The savour of life went wherever the living ones went. And men were conscious of it, for where the Creator is, the creature cannot be unconscious to Him. And it was unto life, or unto death—not neutral, not inactive, not without result. The eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the tongue of the dumb was loosed, the sick were healed, the devils were cast out, the oracles were

[1] All Saints' Day.

put to silence, and they that saw were made blind. Thus it was, wherever God in His Church came. Sin in the flesh was condemmed—for holiness in flesh was seen. The flesh was proved vain as the grass, and the glory of it as the flower of grass. The new creature was proposed, witnessed of, and all men were invited to become parts of the holy and the mighty thing—the new creature and temple of God. And of those so invited many by the grace of God became obedient unto the faith. And they who became so were separated from the old thing, and made sons of God; and in them also the works of a present God went forward, and by them the gospel was "sounded abroad" still farther, and the strength and glory of the world was at last constrained to bow the knee at the name of Jesus.

The world was overcome; and the victory that overcame it was faith; and the way in which it was overcome was by the word of truth, by the testimony of Jesus. It was overcome through patience, through charity, through forbearance; it was by suffering reproach; it was in blessing those who cursed; in being despised; in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness; in being buffeted, and having no certain dwelling-place; in being reviled, defamed, persecuted, made the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things. And the power by which it was overcome was not by mighty men, or by excellency of man's speech, or wisdom; but by common men, by youths, by women, by babes and sucklings. By a mighty

thing indeed, for it was by the body of Christ. It was by the Holy Ghost, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. But by no mighty *visible* thing. As Christ was crucified through weakness, so was every member of His body each in his measure. But because they were members of His body, and because He was raised by the power of God, they also were risen and He was in them. He was in them as one, and they were one. That was their strength—not merely that they were one, but that He dwells in that which is *one*. Had they not been one, He would not have been there; and all their speaking of truth, and their testimony to Jesus, and all their suffering, and patience, and endurance, would have gone for nothing, for God would not have been there. He dwells in that which the Holy Ghost hath made one. That then becomes His instrument, as it is written,[1] "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." When they are one, then the world can believe.

We should remember the saints. The history of the Church ought to be more familiar than it is, to us and to our children. Then there would be

[1] John xvii. 22, 23.

no pet or party saints—such as St. Francis, or St. Bernard, St. Peter or St. Paul; who have been so used as to make living men and women forget that they are themselves saints and holy brethren—such as Cranmer, or Knox, or Luther, or Calvin, who have made living men forget that they were, and are, no more than members of the common body of Christ. But we would equally regard all God's children. We would feel how God spake of them. We would see Him *in them* still, where they are, hidden from our view, their souls in vision at the foot of the altar, their dust asleep in hope. We would admire His work in them. We would feel our unity with them—living stones of the one building—in whom, on the earth in their day, the witness for God was continued, and the work of God was done; through whom the truth and the ordinances of God, yea, the life of God, were preserved and perpetuated until our own day. And we would see them waiting as the old saints did. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, * * * having obtained a good report through faith, they received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

But there has been here also—in the Christian Church—a long time, and many generations, during which men forgetting the truth of a *present* God—and of the Church as His dwelling-place—took to living upon tradition and mere scripture, and fell into all the inefficaciousness of a tradi-

tional religion, even as it was from the days of Malachi till those of John the Baptist. It was a time of scribes, and therefore of pharisees, and philosophers, and politicians. In their hands Christianity became a system, and its religion an observance of forms—rigid as a dead body before corruption seizes it. The truth came to be handled as an abstraction, and not a person. The grace of God was regarded as something apart from God, and independent of His presence and personal operation. Discussion took the place of faith. The members envied one against the other. The body was rent and torn—the very property of unity being forgotten, except as a party pretence, or as a doctrine to be used for overthrowing the pretensions of another party. A worldly status was more anxiously cared for than the office of witnessing for God, and the Church, leaning upon the kingdoms and fluctuating powers of this world, followed their manners, forgot her own supernatural being, and accepted such sanction as men were willing to clothe her withal.

Of that period the saints are more hidden from our eye. And yet, perhaps, those who did survive during it, who had faith to see the light of God in the midst of that darkness with which the fleshly mind had covered it, who had patience to bear with the vile and corrupt exterior, and with the condition of bondage, and with the broken and diseased body, for the sake of Him who was still present therein — by whom therefore the precious gift of God was still preserved on the

earth, and Satan deprived of his triumph : perhaps they may not be less than the brighter and more boasted saints, whom men's folly has exalted into Christian demigods. And, for us, they afford an encouraging exhibition of the great things that God can do in the midst of darkness and superstition, and of spiritual and fleshly tyranny, for those humble ones who look to Him.

All these then died in faith. From the resurrection of Christ and the giving of the Holy Ghost to this day, all these died. They fell asleep, since the new creature began to be till now, some recently before our own eyes, some in the earliest days of the propagation of the gospel. But as the Son of God could not be holden captive by death, because He was one with the Father, so also these, because they are one with the Son. The peculiarity of a Christian's death is, that he is not separated from Christ thereby. And a new time must come, as the resurrection of Jesus did come, when they shall appear again, and the body of Christ be seen in its entireness, entering into the glory of its Head. And there must be a generation on whom this event shall fall. The second coming of the Lord must be announced to them, and it must happen, just as there was a generation at last in Jerusalem among whom God appeared. And that generation, as that former, shall bring iniquity to perfection. The circumcised brought fleshly wickedness to perfection. The baptized shall then bring spiritual wickedness to perfection. The appearance of the

Messiah in humility was the occasion of the one. The appearance of the Messiah in the glory of His Father and of the holy angels shall meet the other on the earth. Such a generation *must* be. *Such* a generation of *Christians*. And of *that* generation shall be required the blood of all the saints and the martyrs of Jesus. For then the prayers of these souls under the altar shall be heard. That "great tribulation,"[1] such as never *was* upon the earth, and never again *shall be* upon it, shall then overtake men, when they that have shed the blood of the saints shall have blood given them to drink.

We are that generation who may do that last sin. In that sin every one shall share who sees not the invisible God, where He is now—since the day of Pentecost—to be seen, in His Church, in men. Antichrist is he who denies that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.[2] All who deny that the Church is His body, and that the Holy Ghost dwells therein; all who would bring God down from the height, or bring Him up from the depths, and to whom He is not in the mouths and in the hearts of men; they shall disobey God, and follow antichrist. All who through unbelief see not God in their rulers and guides; all who through uncharity see Him not in their brethren, they shall join in this iniquity, and seek to put God out of His creation, and shall be overtaken with "the great tribulation." Nay more; all

[1] ἡ θλίψις ἡ μεγάλη. [2] 1 John iv.

who deny the actings of God in His Church by men: who say it is not God who speaks; it is not God who baptizes; it is not God whom baptism joins us unto; it is not God manifest in flesh, that is the food of the holy table; the deniers, the strong deniers, of these things—these shall be the prey. And does not everything tell us that we are in that generation on whom these things shall come? Do not all who like Daniel have searched the Scriptures tell us so? Do not the worldly prints themselves tell us so? Is there not a voice from every tribe in Christendom that tells us so? Does not the swift ripening of human power and invention tell us so? Must not God have some swift message to send when He permits men to fly so swiftly over the earth? Must not God have some message for all the inhabitants of the earth, when He opens, as is now done, every region and land to the access of Christian men? Do not the shakings and changes in kingdoms, does not the heaving and rending to pieces of the Church tell us so? It is the time for the dead, lying in the dust, in all regions and lands, to have their blood avenged. We know that the generation on whom that shall come shall be a doubting generation. Is it not written, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" And what holy thing is there, that this present generation does not doubt and call in question?—Not silently, not secretly and ashamedly, not from weakness of conscience but from self-confidence and pride of intellect, not by

skulkers in corners but openly—loudly—boldly—and with countenance of a prevalent, and all but victorious party. There can scarcely be imagined *less* faith on the earth than now. The widow's day for being avenged of her adversary must then be come. Shall we discern the face of the heavens, and know the tokens of weather in the earth and in the sky, and shall we not discern the signs of these times?

But let us consider our own duty. They without *us* cannot be perfected. The body is one. Till the body is perfected, the individuals of whom it consists cannot be perfected. Till then, they *all* suffer loss. The dead, in that they are dead; the living, in that they are weak, and as yet "filling up the measure of the sufferings of Christ for His body's sake, the Church." The dead are dead, and death was the curse for sin. Their souls and bodies are separate. Under that amount of death they are now suffering. Moreover, they have not received that which they hoped for. They looked for a city and a kingdom. They have not received the promise. The first apostles are not sitting on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The saints have not yet inherited the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They rest for a little season. They expect, until the last enemy shall be put under their feet. Therefore, should not we earnestly look for that day, and rejoice and give thanks at ever, hope and prospect of it; and seek to be perfected and prepared for it; and help and

urge forward every means of hastening it; and preach the gospel—that is, all of us who are called so to do—or obtain the preaching of the gospel for these last days, to every one that has yet to hear; and lay aside our weights and entanglements, our personal thoughts, and our selfish cares, that we may say in truth, "Thy kingdom come?" The form of all this has been. More or less it has always been in profession and in form. But with us let there be the reality; the real asking of God to fulfil *now* His promise; "O Lord send now prosperity." The real desire for the kingdom of God, let it be found in us. Do not sit and talk of it, and speculate concerning it, its probable time, and its mode, and its circumstances. Watch for it, as they that watch for the morning—for the rising of the sun—the surest of all nature's events. Men who are doing so, do not speculate about it. They know it will come, and they wait for it, or as St. Luke says of the shipwrecked crew, "*wish* for day." And let there be a true and *real* preaching of the gospel. There has been a preaching of sermons. Let the coming of the Lord be declared. We cannot suppose that John the Baptist preached what we call sermons. He spake because he believed, and that which he believed was true, and God had bidden him speak it, and God gave power to his word, and the way of the Lord *was* prepared. Let your preachers speak that which they believe, because they believe, not because they have to preach. Men will soon feel the difference, for

God will make words so spoken, mighty and effectual. For there are yet many to be prepared: and until they be prepared the saints whom ye this day have celebrated must suffer loss, and have their expectation postponed. Cease then, dear brethren, to think of preaching, as the age of scribes hath thought of it—as we all have thought of it. Christianity is not a school of philosophy. It is not a doctrine. Neither is it a mere religion. It is a constant fact. It is an existence. And the Church is a living, moving, operating work of God. A school of doctrine never converted men. Even Judaism did not *convert* men, it grew with men, an outward thing—less than the men. But the Church is greater than men, for it is God present in the flesh. If you hold Christianity to be but a doctrine, you will not bring any children uuto God. If you believe in a present God, if you see God in flesh, if you hold forth God in flesh, you will then know how mighty are the words of a man, when they are thus the words of God.

And now, that the Church may as one move onward the purpose of God, what is the exhortation of the apostle?[1] "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against

[1] Hebrews xii. 1, &c.

Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." We are to "run with patience the race set before us." With patience, for God will not do man's will. He will not accomplish *our* thought. No doubt our best and wisest thoughts, our nearest conjectures after the perfect will of God, our most favourite efforts of piety, shall all be reproved of folly more or less. And it requires patience to bear reproof and disappointment. And men—all men, even our brethren and our fellow-labourers—they will disappoint us, and require patience. And we ourselves still more. The creature's mutability and infirmity of the flesh, and the hindrances and resistances of Satan—all these will make a demand for patience. By continual repentance—by your daily humble litany—you must abide in patience: by your prayers and intercessions for others, by your spirit of thanksgiving.

And he adds, "looking"—not at the saints, for he says, "looking *away*";[1] but looking "unto Jesus." He is the perfect example; the leader and the perfecter of the faith. The saints were nothing more than you are yourselves. You are called to surpass them. The victory of faith is perfect in Him, for He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For the joy that was set before Him He endured, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. What was the joy set before Him? It was the accomplishment of the will of God. It was not the

[1] Ἀφορῶντες.

personal joy of returning to the bosom of the Father. He did not leave the bosom of the Father, merely to return as He went. No. He went to sow in tears, that He might reap in joy; He went forth and wept, and sowed precious seed, that He might reap an abundant harvest. And His joy is, to return again bringing His sheaves with Him. That was the joy set before Him—our gathering together unto Him, the drawing of all men unto Him. Is He not now expecting —until His enemies be made His footstool? He who said unto Him, "sit Thou at My right hand" said also, "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." The perfecting of His body was the first joy set before Him; and next, that which He shall accomplish through means of His perfected body. That was the joy which He looked at, and which we also must look at. For that He endured the cross. To endure means to lie under a thing, until it be all finished. No physical necessity lay upon Him to do so. No physical necessity lay upon any of the saints. "Truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." But it was His will to endure. His love to man made Him so will. His hope of the joy of being able to say at last, "Behold I and the children whom God hath given Me," enabled His human heart steadfastly so to will. He "despised the

shame"—He thought it little. He looked at the greater thing, the hope that was set before Him.

He "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself." Such—such as never was exhibited before. Such as never could be exhibited before. For the Holy One—the Truth—God Himself was the contradicted one. The whole life of Jesus on earth was one long contradiction. He could not open His ear but He heard God contradicted. He could not look around but He saw God contradicted. On His person, through all His senses, in all His actings, by all the actings of men, came the full tide of the fallen creature's contradiction to God. Impurity against the pure One, disobedience around the obedient One, dashed as the waves of the ocean against the steadfast rock. Well may it be written, "such." We cannot conceive it, but we know at least that it *was* incomprehensibly great. And we *can* "consider Him" that endured it. And if we do consider Him, the Holy Ghost assures us that we shall not weary and faint in our minds. Otherwise we shall indeed weary and grow faint. Those saints had an opportunity to return. And verily so have we—we shall have every opportunity. But should we at any time be urged by a desire to go back, this is the way in which we shall be enabled to overcome that temptation. Consider Him. If we consider Him, and if we consider the joy that was set before Him, and that we shall share it when His hopes are fulfilled; then we shall not be weary nor faint, and the desire of

a fair opportunity to return shall depart out of us. The thing we have to strive against is sin. Not merely sin in ourselves, but sin in the fallen creation of God. The *Church* is now the grand butt of all the contradictions of that which is opposed to God. And it can only *endure* the contradiction. It can do no more; for it hath not *one* carnal weapon. It is the pillar of the truth—and the lie is all around it. It is the light of the world—and the darkness is all around it; nay has gone near to engulf and extinguish it, has "reached even to the neck," and almost taken away that faith by which the Church should hold unto her Head. The stretching out of the enemy's wings filleth now the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel. But He is the judge. We are not, now, to judge the world. We are in the world as He was. "I am not come to judge the world, but to save." For sin, *He* condemned sin in the flesh, that men might be saved from sin. The Church condemns sin, for the saving of the men that are in the world. The Church reproves the deeds of darkness, that men may come to the light and be cleansed. The fire shall come afterwards. But *this* is our joy—Jesus the Saviour is present in us. What we endure, we endure for the sake of many—of very many, doubtless of very many. And we shall see of the travail of our soul, as He shall of His, and be satisfied. We shall say, It was not too much. Nay, the reward is a thousand fold beyond the travail—for He travaileth in us. It is now the travail of eighteen hundred years—

and the harvest must be at hand. As in autumn you look on the fields one day, and see the grain filling on the stalk, and then another day, when perhaps nothing has occurred meanwhile beyond a gentle shower, or a warm sunshine; and behold! the reapers are there, and the land is yielding up its fruit. So it must now be at hand on the whole earth, for the earth must at last yield up its fruit. We should therefore endure more cheerfully than any other generation of the Church, because we see so near us that which all generations have laboured for—the harvest and reward of the labour of all generations.

And consider what great advantages you possess over and above those of these earlier saints, whose faith St. Paul celebrates. Not merely that you follow Jesus, and they went before Him. Not merely that ye have seen what He *can* do, in that which He *did*. But, that ye are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. They were not. You are partakers of the divine nature, —they were not. You have received the Holy Ghost—which they had not. "The Holy Ghost was not then given, because that Jesus was not then glorified." You are fed with the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ—which they were not. Daily you are blessed with the effectual words, which bring the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ of which they speak, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost;—*effectual* words, as effectual as the words which said, "Let

there be light." God is in you. As Jesus was, so are we in this world.

What consideration more need be adduced? Think of the ten thousands of His saints who are waiting for the last man that will yield to God—and hasten ye the words that shall find him out; that they may come with Jesus, that He may appear. Think of them—but look only unto Jesus. And know your might, and the sureness, the largeness of your hope.

And labour that none be left behind unto "the great tribulation." Do not say, some *shall* be left behind. Have the Scriptures then disclosed to you too much, and made you too wise? Beware, lest perhaps they should be left behind through your fault, through your negligence.

How sad shall be that outer darkness unto which they shall be left. How sudden their surprise, when the saints shall be caught away. A desertion, which no prayers shall be able to hinder—a mighty act of God, which no human strength shall be able to retard. It is come, and it is done—a change and cutting off between man and man—eternal, absolute, irrevocable. Pity your fellow men *now*. Take heed also unto your own selves *now*. The day cometh when no place shall be found for repentance, even for them who seek it earnestly, and with tears.

And now unto the Father, &c.

SERMON XIX.

THE CHURCH'S HOPE.

2 PETER, iii. 1-15.

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," &c.

You have, then, dear brethren, lived through another year;[1] you have laid behind you another long list of days. Another period of the patience of your God has passed away; and of these many days you cannot recall one. Their events are all irrevocable and unchangeable. The things that you have said and done during that time, as it ran its course, cannot be unsaid or undone. It will be true to all eternity that thus you acted, or failed to act. The days themselves have all swept past, and are extinguished; gone, sunk in oblivion and dark night. Their joys and sorrows,

[1] Preached on Circumcision, 1847.

deep, agitating, transporting, distracting as they were, are gone, forgotten, save where scars of slightly healed wounds still rankle, or where remorse has planted its deadly sting. Some are glad that there now lie behind them so many more of their days of sorrow and weariness; and that they are one stage nearer to the end of their journey,—the end, as they are accustomed to call the grave, as if that was man's goal; glad, as if those who had not in this life a joy that overcame all weariness, and a hope that shed heavenly sunshine and blessed peace even in the midst of the bitterest trials of the life of fallen man,—as if *they* could find peace or happiness in any future stage of their being; frantically supposing that the unknown dark scene, into which they shall plunge with their last sigh, *could* bring any change to the unchanged heart, or present to them a different God from Him whom in this present life they had been unable to confide in. Others are glad because they have been brought nearer to some expected good after which their eyes have been gazing, and their hopes stretching out. They have lost their then present time, too discontented with it to use it for God, embracing a future that will perhaps never exist, scarcely intending to use the good *it* is expected to bring, save as a stepping stone towards some farther, vainer, more imaginary promise, as if the earth which we inhabit was not God's earth, as if *His* will were nothing, and His revealed purpose no element of stern certainty, amid the instabilities and uncertainties

of the frail creature, which alone their eyes can see, on which alone their calculations can be founded. There are *others* who are glad—for conscious of their failures and shortcomings, their trangressions and sins, they have confessed them with honest hearts, they have bewailed them with childlike sorrow, they have believed in that blood which cleanseth from all sin, they have looked in the face of Jesus Christ, and seen in Him peace with God. And their words and works—whatsoever they have done, being in spirit and intention at least done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they leave with Him content, seeking no justification of themselves, but acceptance in the beloved One, that He may bring good out of evil, and perfection out of imperfection.

All it seems, then, are glad—more or less—for there is little in any day that should make a man regret its brevity. Few would be willing to live a year over again, unless they had power to change and choose among its events. Even the believer is glad to let it lie there, a repented of thing, a forgiven thing. All are glad—some religiously, some atheistically: some because they see the future in the hands of God; some because they *will* to shape the future for themselves; some for mere progress' sake, and because the future cannot be worse than the past: the most part, through want of thought, saying, "to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Such being the common sentiment, and the various manner in which this turn of time is taken notice of by

men, I have thought it good for confirming the good and holy, and for lifting into true consolation and joy those who may seem to come short at such a time, to call your attention to such words of holy Scripture as speak of that event unto which all time is hasting,—the great new year of the creation—the acceptable year of the Lord.

I must begin with a remark partly critical, yet very necessary to the full appreciation of the meaning and force of this epistle. It had been revealed to St. Peter that he was about to be taken away. The church was about to be left without his guidance and authority. Now he and the rest of the apostles thought to have perfected the church. While each one brought up those whom his own ministry had won, they thought to have in common presented the Bride of the Lamb, chaste, united—a first fruits of mankind, ready, complete, matured for the joyful and glorious coming again of their Lord and Master. They had looked for this end of their labours. But it had gradually appeared that it would not be so. Unwillingly they opened their eyes to see that the church failed to stand *by* them, and to uphold them in their zeal. All Asia had turned from St. Paul. St. John was not received by those who loved to have the pre-eminence. Nay, Diotrephes had the mastery in the church, refused the brethren that came from St. John, and cast out those who would have received them. St. Jude complains of the

springing up of the same spirit, and prophesies of its increase.

The wickedness of man has then, it seems, come in again and marred the good work of God. The bride is slow to make herself ready. The time of her presentation must be deferred. The apostles are not *now* to present her. Nay, they are withheld from external labour, for the door is shut against them by their own disciples. The church says we can do without you. The epistle of Christ, which should have been their commendation to the regions yet unvisited, no longer contains the pure writing of the Spirit of the living God. They that should have helped them have become their hindrance. And they are withheld from internal discipline. Mercy withholds them from using that power, which, where edification is refused, can only destroy. And to St. Peter the Lord has revealed that he must shortly put off this tabernacle. What a multitude of thoughts, and cares, and suggestions, this must have brought to his faithful heart! How *much* he could have wished to do! He was not ignorant how greatly the church stood in need of apostles, He was not ignorant that apostles, like all other gifts, were given for the perfecting of the saints; and that the saints were far, very far, from being perfected. He was not ignorant that they could not be perfected until they *all* came together in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, —that thus only could the perfect man be reached, the measure of the stature of the fulness of

Christ.[1] He was not ignorant of the divine instrumentality by which so great a result was to be attained. He knew that it could not be attained without apostles, and yet he is going to be taken away. And what does he do? Does he appoint a successor? No, for his successor must be an apostle. He cannot find a successor. None of the *rest* of the twelve could be his successor, for each of them had his own burden, his own field. They were all as sorely bestead as he was. They needed to look out for successors for themselves. And none other person than they could he make his successor; for an apostle must be "not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." No, he names no successor; what then does he do? see what is written,[2] "I think it meet, so long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power *and coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ." He does what he can do. He will endeavour that they may be able to have certain things in remembrance. This is *all* he *can* do. Just as St. Paul wrote to Timothy, because he could not come to him,[3] "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto

[1] Eph. iv. 11-16. [2] 2 Pet. i. 13-16. [3] 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God." Because he could not *come*, therefore he *writes;* there was need of something far more than writing, but he was restrained; and he gives Timothy a little instruction how to *behave* himself in the *meantime*, in the *hopes* of the better more necessary thing. He does not say "do yourself what I should do if I were present," but he says, "hold things together until I come." And again, "till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."[1] In the second epistle, we find him exactly in St. Peter's circumstances; for there he tells Timothy, "the time of my departure is at hand;" and what does he then say? All he can say is, "make full proof of thy ministry;" he does not say, make proof of mine, for I appoint thee as my successor, but of *thy* ministry; and what this ministry was — how limited, how different from the apostolic — he explains by saying, "preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; do the work of an evangelist."—"Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me."—"Stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."[2] Titus and he were also commanded to do the only thing that could be done, by ordaining elders in every city, and by committing to faithful men that which they had themselves learned. This much he com-

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 13. [2] 2 Tim. *passim.*

missions them to do. But he speaks nothing of that, which he says elsewhere came upon himself daily, "the care of all the churches"—he says nothing of that. Nor does he tell him or Titus, that on them or on their ministry shall devolve the office of presenting the Bride—the one Church out of all the earth at the coming of the Lord.

This must have been a bitter disappointment to the apostles. To find that they were not able to finish the work which they had to do. To find that the sin and coldness of the church, even of their own disciples, made it impossible,—that men were minding their own things, their own objects, and their own ways, and not the things of Christ and the ways of God. Still more bitter was it, because they saw not *how* God was going to provide for His children. They only perceived that there was to be a departing from the faith—a giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; and they were made to prophesy of perilous times about to come, growing worse and more perilous even to the very last day. They foresaw that sound doctrine would not be endured, that instead of it there would be doctrine palatable to diseased spirits, taught by men not sent of God, but chosen by the sickly church itself, to the increase of its own ignorance and errors; blind men for leading the blind. As their eyes grew dim with age and grief, they beheld in spiritual foresight the children for whom they had laboured and spent

themselves; for whom they had suffered reproaches necessities, and distresses; instead of going up into the land of promise, and entering upon possession, sinking away from the region where the light and the grace of God had been so abundant, into a wide wilderness, in which for generations, they should be left to wander,—their guides removed from them; and instead of going on, and growing, in one, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, separated, scattered, according to their nations, cities, and tribes; trying to keep the faith once delivered to the saints, and hardly prevailing to do so; retaining merely the spark of divine life; waiting for a time of revival and merciful visitation. They foresaw these things obscurely, fortunately for them they foresaw them obscurely, and they prophesied of them obscurely. We have *seen* them; we can read of them in church history; and we can see what they have come to: and *what deeper* darkness and confusion twice confounded may *yet* fall upon the Church of God we can partly imagine. But I say *fortunately* for them they foresaw it darkly. And there they are, —one after the other, taken away from the evil to come, suffered to rest from their labours and await their crown—with none to take their office; with none to minister the higher graces which they used to impart; with none who had authority and spiritual power to bind into one the various portions of the church, and in *one* to present them for the one unction, which floweth from the head unto the skirts of the garments.

And in these circumstances what did they do? They told the church to keep in mind certain things. "I will endeavour that after my decease ye may be able to have these things always in remembrance." St. Peter can do nothing more than write two short epistles; and this is the purpose and object of them both. And why is he so anxious to enable them to have these things in remembrance? For this reason; because the things are true and certain; because if they keep them in mind, it will not be possible for them, even in their most forsaken and deserted condition, to forget that they have been purged from their old sins; because they will at least escape the hazard of being barren and unfruitful in *that* knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, on which they had entered when they became members of His body, the Church; and lastly, because they were very likely to let them slip. And what does he consider the head and front of his doctrine? Read what he says,[1] "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty." Why does he single out that point of doctrine (as we call it), and through the remainder of all that epistle mention no other? Because this was not a *doctrine*, but the great promise of the gospel. Because this was a promised certain fact and occurrence, on which the hope of the Church should be fixed; steadily looking at which,

[1] 2 Pet. i. 16.

they would be able to pilot themselves over the stormy ocean, on the face of which they were about to be launched. Because this was an intention of God—a thing which God was going to do—a thing for the sake of which God had done all those other things that were already past, the declaration of which formed the substance of the rest of St. Peter's instruction. He insists on this,—"the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" because the holding of that hope *would* enable them to hold all the rest;—*alone could* enable them to hold all the rest. It had been the beginning of the preaching of the gospel. "Repent,"—why?—"for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Isaiah, Daniel, all the prophets had foretold it; David and the Jewish polity had prefigured it; John the Baptist, our Lord Himself, took it for granted that through those foregoing divine instructions, the people expected it, and at least understood what was meant by the words, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was proclaimed as no new unheard-of thing, but as the purpose of God, which He had had from the beginning; of which He had spoken from the beginning; and now had sent His Son to make the grand preparation for it.

Afterwards, what had been the promise of Christ to His disciples—to those who had received that first word? Why, this—"I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Still later—what had been the consolation, the *one* topic of consolation given to the amazed apostles, when they saw their

Lord caught away and received out of their sight? "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so *come* in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." St. Peter began his ministry with the proclamation of this same thing. He laid this hope before his first converts. What was the point, the *practical* point to which he brought his discourse in those days, when souls were added to the Church by thousands at a time? —"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."[1] I say that is the practical point to which he brings his discourse. And what he began with, he reiterates to the end. What he declared to them at the first, that same thing now at the last he recalls, endeavouring that after his decease they may keep it in remembrance. It is evermore—the coming and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. And there were many reasons for his particular earnestness in commending this truth to their careful recollection. This truth is it which the false teachers will labour the most assiduously to abuse, to change, to fritter and explain away, to extinguish and obliterate, saying,—Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the

[1] Acts iii. 19-21.

beginning of the creation." You are deceived. You have mistaken the words of the prophets and apostles—they are not to be taken literally. The language of scripture is figurative. A plain man cannot safely read it. If he take it as it was spoken, he will become a visionary, a self-deceived, and surely to be disappointed man. God has no such intention. The kingdom of God is not a polity. Does not our Lord Himself tell you that it is *within* you? The kingdom of God is not a kingdom, but something quite different from a kingdom. It is grace, say some. It is a moral condition, say others. You enter it by conversion, and that is all that is meant, says one. Oh no; you enter it at your death, says another. So will prate the false teachers. St. Peter foresees it —walking after their own *lusts*, after their own notions and spiritual systems—out of their own bowels spinning their spider's web, for Christian men to hold by. And because he foresees it, therefore, he says,[1] "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." According to what promise? The promise of which he had been reminding them—the promise which men would be tempted to think that the Lord was slack concerning, the promise of His coming—the promise of a condition of this earth brought about by Christ reigning there—the promise of a kingdom under Christ the king, to begin which He should really, certainly come; to continue

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 13.

which He should abide, gathering His saints unto Him, that where He was, they should be also.

But there was yet another reason why he makes this his leading point of exhortation, and of their perpetual heedful remembrance. The Church is saved by the faith of God's acts, and by the hope of His purposes. *His* in contradistinction to all others. By these the Church is kept until the purpose be accomplished. And the next grand cardinal acting of God Almighty was to be this—as Peter had said at the first—"When the times of refreshing shall come, and He shall send Jesus Christ." This was the purpose of God, which would come in, and make vain all men's purposes. Without their hearts being filled with the memory of this promise, and without the hope of this grand coming act of God, they would conceive purposes of their own, they would believe and hope for acts and purposes of their own—of the creature—and be led away after their own and other men's lusts.

Man *must* have a purpose and scheme of life. He is a rational being who lays hold of the future, and is unable to rest in the present; he is working up always toward an end. The baptized man has received from God higher powers as well as higher responsibilities, and with these powers he is still less able than the psychical unbaptized man to rest in the present. The more he is awake to his state and conscious to the movements of divine life within him, the more certainly does he look *forward*, and stand in need of a true hope—a true

scope of life. The hope *is*, this grand act of God —the sending of Jesus Christ—the kingdom of God—the new heavens and new earth in which dwelleth righteousness—and the scope of life *is* to yield to a divine course of preparation for God's next act, to wait for that act, and to labour for it. *That* is it for which GOD the Father is preparing, for which He is waiting. That is the hope of the heart of *Him* who is at the right hand of God, whom the heavens have received *for a time*. That is the scope of His present life *as man*. For consider, dear brethren, what did *He* when He ascended up on high? Did He forget His begun work, and think no more of the kingdom whose commencement He had on earth prepared? No. It was the very thing which, as man, He did think of and continue to work—"This Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear"—so speaks St. Peter of the next event that happened after our Lord's ascension. Jesus had said, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come, but if I depart I will send Him." He had commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, saying, Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. When He sat down on the right hand of the Father, He began to build His Church by the Holy Ghost, and He hath continued to do the same ever since; and the continual intercession which He hath made has been con-

cerning His Church, that it might be prepared for His coming and kingdom.

Let us believe this *reverently*, dear brethren, and think and speak of it with *godly fear*, *but* let us *know* and believe it. This His coming and kingdom is our blessed Lord's own hope, and the scope of His life as man, where He is at the right hand of God. And the Christian is called unto the fellowship of his Lord's hopes and labours. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Henceforth I call you not servants but friends, for the friend knows the heart, the thoughts, the interests, the employments of his friend.

Now St. Peter, caring for the Church, anxious for those whom he was about to leave, knew that this hope alone had power to exclude private lusts of men—alone had power to enable men to live in this world as having their citizenship in the kingdom that is about to be revealed. By this alone would man's purposes be made holy, be kept in their fitting place, proportion, and subserviency; and all his actions and his temporal duties and callings be lifted up into their due honourableness, as parts of that great whole whose author was God, and whose perfection was to be seen in the kingdom that shall be revealed. St. Peter knew this, and *therefore* is he so particular on this head, and so urgent for their remembering it. And no wonder, for this alone gives meaning to all God's other words and ways. It gives its fruit and result to all creation itself; it is the grand act unto which

all other acts of God had been introductory; and among men it gives meaning to their history, and value to all the gifts of God, and to all the ordinances of God.

And does St. Peter stand alone in giving such prominency and emphasis to this truth of the coming and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is it necessary to tell you that as many of the apostles as have sent down to our day the expressions of their parting anxieties for the Church have all spoken in the same way? St. Paul says,[1] —"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." "I would not have you to be ignorant, and to sorrow as those who have no hope, for them which sleep in Jesus will God bring *with Him*." [2] "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain *unto the coming of the Lord*, shall not prevent them which are asleep." And when he prays, he prays thus—"I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and when he exhorts, he exhorts thus—"Now we beseech you by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him;" and again—"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patient waiting for Christ*;" and again—"Brethren,

[1] 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. [2] 1 Thess. iv. 13, &c.

be followers of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample (not minding earthly things) for our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself:" and once more—"The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this *present* world." And how shall this self-denial be practised? Shall they give up all the natural life of fallen man, and have nothing to put in its place? No. He adds—"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." St. James also,[1]—"Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Be patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And St. John,[2]—Abide in Him; that when He shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." St. Jude also,[3] in like manner, who lays hold again on the earliest words of prophecy, and brings forward Enoch, the seventh from Adam, as inviting men to look forward to the same event.

I say, then, that the apostles in their ministry laboured to keep their spiritual children in constant remembrance of that kingdom and coming of the

[1] James v. 7, 8. [2] 1 John ii. 28. [3] Jude 14-25.

Lord Jesus Christ, which they had first preached to them, and to the hope of which they had from the beginning invited them. They expected their children to abide in the *faith* by the influence of this *hope*. They expected them to prevail against the temptations and lusts of the world, by stedfastly keeping this hope in their eye; and when the apostles saw that they themselves were to be removed from the visible portion of the Church, and that they should be able no longer by their word to comfort, or by their authority to command, or by their rod to correct, or by laying on of their hands to perfect, or in any way personally to edify or build the house of God, *this* hope they regarded as the Church's sheet-anchor; their dying breath was expended on the inculcation of it.

And have the children given heed to those last words of their fathers? Has the Church looked for that blessed hope, or have the lusts of other things entered in? Alas! like most children, they have heard, they have recorded the words, the solemn last words—they have laid them by reverently, piously laid them up, laid them by. They have themselves gone forth amid the activities of present, visible things, and the future has gradually become dim—the future to which their life belonged, to which their life looked, and all their thoughts should have tended, has become dim. One or two centuries were enough to obscure it. The lust of other things did enter. The words which St. Peter anticipated began to be

heard. The scoffers came—the scoffing Christians—the scoffing teachers spake them, and said, "Where is the promise of His coming? The fathers are dead—they are at rest—the grave is their rest, and it shall be ours too. As for us, our hope is *not* the coming of the Lord, or if it be, He comes to us at our death. Whatever more may be in it, that is the meaning with which we are concerned. Enough for us as *individuals* that we think of *that*. Let us *prepare* for death. Let us always solemnize ourselves by thinking about *death*. That will far more surely contribute to our sanctification than thinking about the power and coming of the Lord. Ours shall be the words of the prophet (a rebellious prophet, let it be remarked, who soon after perished miserably by a divine judgment),—ours shall be the words of the prophet, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his;" for, where is the promise of His coming?

And then, when men ceased to wait for that for which Jesus is waiting at the right hand of God; when they ceased to have by the Holy Ghost fellowship with the God-man, they fell into divisions, they differed from one another, they disputed, they quarrelled, they began to bite and devour one another. Forgetting the truth, they turned aside to fables. The truth is one; the fables are manifold; and the Church became churches as manifold. Hence, divisions that could not be healed, doubts that could not be met, questions too hard for any one to loose. For the apostles

are gone who had ultimate, universal authority, and who could bind into one. The body of Jesus Christ seems about to part into its original elements, one limb beating itself against another limb, until this our unhappy day.

Let us not refuse, dear brethren, to see the sad estate of the Church militant. Let us not be afraid to look upon it. Let us not be too proud to acknowledge it. Let us not shrink from considering with what heart, with what feeling *He* looks down upon it who is at the right hand of God, and who is about to descend.

We are accustomed to wonder at the infidelity that is in the world. Why, the great miracle is that there is any faith; more especially in lands where the Bible is known to every one. The Bible holds forth a likeness of the Church, as far as words can go in giving the likeness of a living thing. The honest man—knowing his Bible, we shall suppose—looks for the Church corresponding to that likeness, and finds it not. The Church which gives him the Bible says, read *that*, and behold *me*. But the honest man says, No; they correspond not. The Church professes daily, and teaches him to profess, "I believe in one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." But he looks forth; and he beholds unholiness, disunion; catholicity unattempted for the most part, and, as it seems, impossible, unattainable; apostles surviving only in their memory, and in their few, brief, inspired epistles: this is what he sees.

Only allow yourselves to feel the perplexity of the honest man's mind. In any matter of ordinary wordly conduct, what resolution could he in such circumstances come to? I say, the great miracle of the present day is, that faith in Christianity still survives. But, thank God, this is nothing new; for faith is *God's gift*. The believer always *was*, always shall be a workmanship of God; otherwise the gates of hell must long, long ere now have prevailed against the Church.

But, how does Jesus look upon this shattered, *changed* thing that calls itself by His *name*—yea, which holds itself forth, besides His word, as the pendant, the fellow-picture, in which, as in His word, *He* is to be found? He set His Church in the earth, the pillar and ground of the truth. Men's strifes have made that pillar a heap of stones. Truly the word of the prophet hath been fulfilled—"Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the Lord's house as the high places of the forest." The pillar and ground of the truth *hath* become a heap of stones. The stones are indeed parts of that pillar, and God's saints take pleasure in them, and they favour the very dust thereof. What man cannot see, God's saints take pleasure in—the pleasure which faith can supply, calling things that are not as though they were—the pleasure which charity can supply, thinking no evil—the pleasure of which he is capable who still hopes in God. And the Lord Jesus Christ, who remembereth the travail of His soul and waits

to be satisfied; the Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed all these men with His own blood, who gave all these men power to become the sons of God, who divided unto them His Holy Spirit, who called them all brethren, who, girding Himself with a towel, shewed them how they ought by love to serve one another, and wash one another's feet—Oh, brethren, what does He behold? Disappointment, disappointment, black disappointment and nothing else, everywhere, all along, growing darker and more dark as time advances. And with what sentiments does His human heart yearn over this spectacle—the spectacle which His Church presents, which we present, for we are not speaking of an abstraction, but of ourselves, of the baptized men and women who are on the earth. I thought to speak of these sentiments, dear brethren, but I find I cannot. I might picture a man's disappointment, the whole scheme of whose long life, the fruit of whose labours and self-denials, the desire of whose whole being, whose home, whose children in whom his own image is reflected, all that he prizes, is snatched away from him and dissipated before his eyes. It would be a true emblem, but feeble, trite, unworthy of so high, so solemn a thing as that of which we wish to speak. No, brethren, there is none of us able to look into the heart of our elder brother, and tell all that is there. In human words, so far as human words can go, you shall find it in the book of Lamentations, in several chapters of Hosea, in many of the Psalms—and I commend them to the

perusal of all such as are inclined to meditate this sad theme; only forget not *how* it is that the Church has lost her unity, her one form, her one testimony, her blessed internal harmony, and her one steady light for the world of mankind to walk in. She has done so by forgetting exactly that which the departing apostles commended to her recollection, by forgetting the hope of her calling, by ceasing to look for her Lord and for His kingdom, by ceasing to sympathize with Him, and to hope, and to wait for those things for which He was hoping and waiting. It was when the unfaithful steward said, my lord delayeth his coming, that he began to beat his fellow-servants.

And what the Church ceased to desire, she soon lost the means of attaining. Functions that are not put to use in an organized body, naturally decay, perhaps disappear. The Christian loves *himself*, he uses those functions of the Church which terminate in the individual; he forgets the purpose of God; and those functions of the Church which stretch out unto all the purpose of God, he calls superfluous. He is wiser than the Holy Ghost, and he calls them superfluous. These functions are not used in the Church. The faith of the Church does not stir them up. She has forgotten all but her own things; she does not perceive the *necessity* of stirring up these functions. Therefore, they are not developed; they become latent. And these functions are those by which unity would have been preserved. Unity is indeed necessary for all the purposes for which

the Church exists; but most chiefly for the large and eternal purposes of God: and when the latter are overlooked, its necessity is less visible. For the bare existence of Christian individuality it may be dispensed with. For the great purposes of God it is absolutely indispensable.

What, then, is the practical result of our meditation? Why *this*—that we *must* learn to forget *ourselves*. We must cast away the narrow selfishness of individual persons. We must be enlarged, to know what God's purpose is, to desire the accomplishment of it, and to admit all the functions that are necessary for its accomplishment. And first of all we must learn over again the first lesson of what St. Peter preached: and begin to look for our Lord from heaven, and to seek some preparation for His appearing. We shall then learn to look with an eye of charity and of desire upon all who are called by His name, and to feel for them. For are not they, along with ourselves, in a miserable case, and must not God, sooner or later, have a heavy message to send unto His Church? Things cannot go on as they are much longer.

The Lord is at hand. The tokens of it are in the world. Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.

Yet, brethren, do not go to inquire *how* near, or waste your time with those who inquire about days, and calculate the times. These are questions for those who do not wish that it may be now.

Or, do you wish that it may not be now? Why

that wish? Is there then something which you love more than your Lord? If so, O brethren, be ashamed of it; repent of it; ask your heavenly Father's forgiveness, and He will both forgive, and also bestow upon you grace to forget, to forsake, yea to hate that thing which you have preferred before Him. Thus count the long-suffering of God to be salvation.

Or, you wish it may not be now, because of your sins and your unpreparedness. Then you have forgotten, it seems, that you were purged from your old sins. He who cometh is He who took away the sins of the whole world. Lift up your hearts, and take courage. Let your pride be broken down — that is your obstacle. Humble yourselves before your God. Confess your sins; in Him is your help found. Believe the words of God; He says, I have found a ransom; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. He will make you clean by His own blood. He will make you holy by His own Spirit. You know not how—He knoweth how. Cast thy burden upon the Lord.

When He cometh, shall He not say—Peace be unto you?

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And now unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, one God, be ascribed in the Church, all glory and honour, all might, majesty, dominion, and blessing, unto all ages of ages. Amen.

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